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When Jesus Was Young

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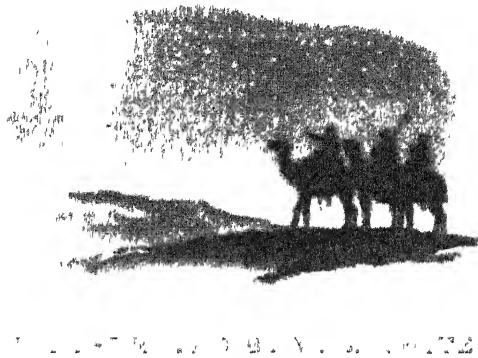
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FIRST BIBLE STORIES: I

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT
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The Place where Jesus was born



IN THIS book we shall read about Jesus, who came to this world long ago, and lived in the land of Palestine. He was sent by God, to be a wonderful teacher, and a friend to everyone. The name of the mother of Jesus was Mary, and she was married to a kind man named Joseph. Jesus had a heavenly Father just as you have: the God who so wonderfully loves and cares for us all.

One day before Jesus was born, Joseph said to Mary, " We have to go

on a long journey to Bethlehem.' Mary made ready for the journey, and soon they set off. They did not get into a motor-car, or ride in a train with lots of carriages. There were no trains or cars in Palestine, so Mary rode on a donkey, and Joseph walked at her side. The ground was sandy and rough, and the journey took a long time.



When Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem they found that a great many people were staying in the little town. The inn was full and they had to look for a long time before they could find a place to stay. But at last a good man told them that they might shelter in his stable.

Have you ever seen a stable? It is a big, roomy place where the animals sleep, and where often they are fed. Cows and horses like to eat hay, and there was hay in the stable where Mary and Joseph found a resting-place.

They were very tired after the long journey, and they were pleased to be able to lie down in the sweet hay, with the quiet beasts all around.

It was there that the little baby Jesus was born. His mother dressed Him in the clothes she had made ready for Him before they started the long walk, and then she laid Him in a

soft bed of hay. It was cosy and warm
in the stable and the baby slept quietly
while His mother watched and smiled.
Mary and Joseph loved little Jesus, just
as your Mummy and Daddy love you.

This is a song about baby Jesus:

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head,
The stars in the bright sky looked down
 where he lay—
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.



The People who came to see the Baby Jesus



WHEN YOU were very small, soon after you were born, kind friends came to see you. Some of them brought you presents. Long, long ago, that is just what happened to the baby Jesus.

First of all some shepherds came. Shepherds are men who look after sheep and lambs, and there were lots of sheep in Palestine. Shepherds are kind men who love the sheep and keep them from harm. To do this they often have to stay out in the fields and on the hill-



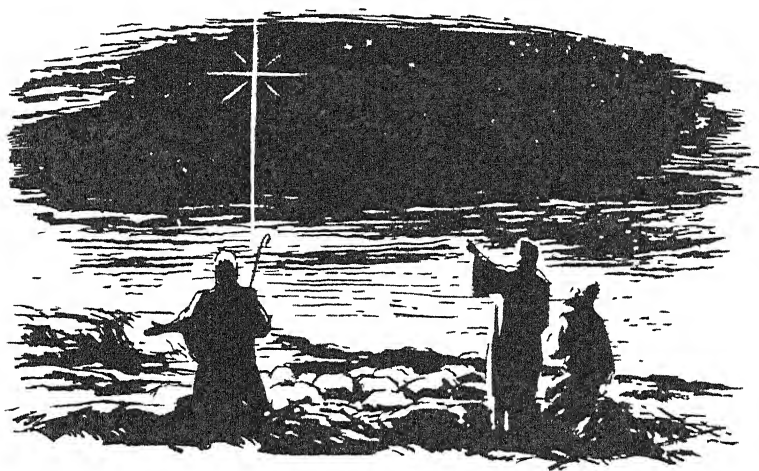
sides all night long, and in the quiet darkness the soft wind blowing through the trees sounds like sweetest music. One night the shepherds heard angel voices which told them of a tiny baby born in the nearby town, who would grow up to be a great King and Saviour. The shepherds hurried away, and soon found the place where Jesus was. I

expect they wondered that He was in such a poor place, but they were told how this came to be. I like to think that they brought as a present a lovely downy cover, made of the lambs' soft wool. The shepherds sat and talked with Mary and Joseph, and then they went back to their sheep.

Later some very wise, clever men came. They had seen a bright, beautiful star in the sky, and they had followed it until they found the baby and His mother. They were so glad to think that a little boy had been born into the world: one who would some day make lots of people glad and happy. They brought the baby Jesus lovely presents. There in the house they unwrapped them for Mary and Joseph to see. There were jars of sweet-smelling perfume, called frankincense and myrrh, and a box with some pieces of real gold. Then the wise men went back to their



own home again. When we look up
at the sky at night and see the shining
stars, we shall think of the bright star
that led the wise men to Jesus.



When Jesus went to Church



WHEN THE baby Jesus was six weeks old Mary and Joseph took Him to Church for the first time. The Church—a beautiful place called the Temple—was five miles away. They were very happy as they carried their lovely baby to church and presented Him to God. Mary took with her a gift of two white doves, and we may be sure that when she gave them to the priest in the Temple, she was saying “Thank you” to God for her little Son.



When they were going up the beautiful marble steps of the Temple an old man called Simeon met them. He took the baby out of Mary's arms, and nursed Him gently for a little while. Then he looked up into the blue sky and thanked God for letting him see the child who would live to bless and save the whole world. After that they met a woman whose name was Anna and who lived near the Temple. She was very old, but she worked hard to help keep the lovely church beautiful, and she spent nearly all her time there. She, too, was very happy when she saw the baby, and told the people standing near her of the great gift that had come to the world.

Mary and Joseph were most surprised at all these happenings, and they knew that the little baby Jesus must be a very special child.

The Long Walk into Egypt

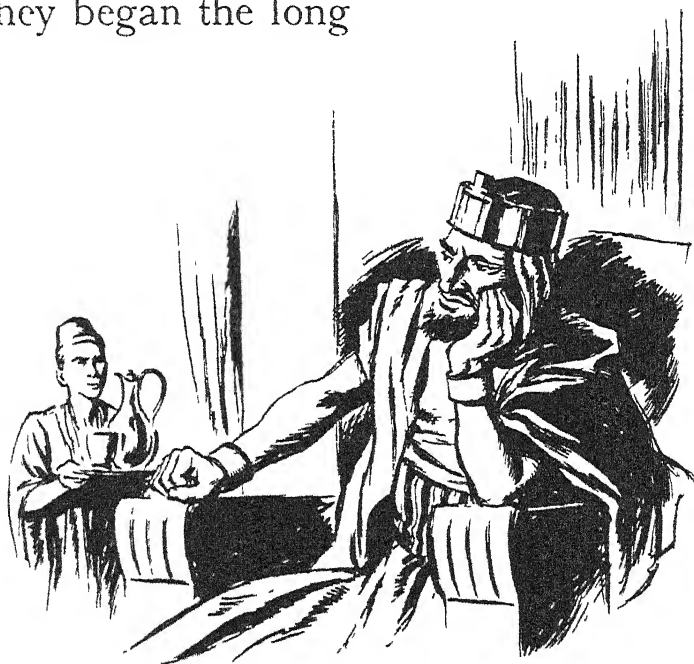


MARY and Joseph loved their baby very much, and every day they asked God to help them to look after Him well.

One day Joseph was warned that the King of his country might try to hurt the little baby Jesus. King Herod thought that the baby might grow up to be a great ruler, and would wish to wear his crown, and sit on his throne. Joseph made up his mind to take Mary and the child Jesus far away to a place

called Egypt. There they would be safe from harm. Before they could start they had to buy food for the journey, and they needed a donkey, too, so that Mary could ride and carry the little baby Jesus in her arms. Perhaps they gave some of the gold out of the box to buy the things they needed.

When they were quite ready they began the long



journey over the sandy desert, and when at last they reached Egypt they felt quite safe. The little Jesus grew bigger and stronger every day, and soon He began to smile, and to make the happy cooing noise which is a baby's way of talking.

After some time they heard that they need not fear the wicked King any longer, so they decided to go back to their own country again. Mary was very glad about that, and smiled to think of showing her little boy to her friends. They found a house at the place called Nazareth, and here they lived happily until Jesus was quite grown up.

Mary and Joseph said "Thank you" to God, for caring for them and bringing them safely back home from Egypt.



The Playtime of Jesus



WHEN JESUS was a boy He had some very happy playtimes. His father was a carpenter. That means that he used wood to make all kinds of things. Little Jesus would watch as Joseph shaped the wood and made tables, doors and seats. Sometimes Joseph would make milking pails and hay-rakes, and many other things that people needed for their work. We can be sure that sometimes he made toys for the little boy. Perhaps he carved a boat for Jesus



to sail in a tub. The floor of the workshop had shavings, little pieces of wood and piles of sawdust lying about. All those things would make lovely play-things.

When it was warm and sunny Jesus would run out into the open country around His home, watching the birds and listening to them singing. Lots of



lovely flowers grew there, and He would pick some and bring them home to His mother. He began to know the names of birds and flowers. He played with other boys and girls, too.

When He was old enough He went to school and learned to read. The teacher talked to all the children about God who made the world we live in, just as we to-day think of the great God who made the tall trees, and lovely flowers and the singing birds.

Jesus at the Temple again



EVERY YEAR Mary and Joseph went up to the Temple—the lovely Church where Jesus was taken when He was a baby. When Jesus was very small He was left at home, with someone to look after Him, but now He was twelve years old, and Mary and Joseph felt that He was old enough to walk all the way without getting too tired.

It was very exciting. The day came when they had to start the journey, and

Joseph put his tools away, and locked the door of the workshop. Mother Mary was busy packing up food.

Lots of people in the village went each year to the great services in the Temple, and Jesus skipped and ran along with other boys and girls. He noticed everything He saw on the way, and there were many strange and interesting sights, but best of all was the



time when they reached the Temple. Then Jesus could go inside and listen to lovely singing and hear the beautiful words spoken there.

All too soon the wonderful time was over, and the roads were full of people walking back towards their homes again. Mary and Joseph could not see Jesus, but they felt quite sure He was walking with some of His friends. When night-time came and they still had not seen Him, they were forced to turn back. When they came to the Temple again, there was Jesus sitting talking to the teachers and asking them questions.

Mary had been very worried, and she went to Jesus and said, " Why did you do this? We have been looking everywhere for you."

Jesus looked at her, and smiled and said, " I must hear about God, who is My Heavenly Father. I must learn what he wishes Me to do."



Mary was very glad to have found her boy again. She loved Him very much, and we read in the Bible that Jesus was a good boy, and that He made His mother and father happy.



Wonderful Things Jesus Did



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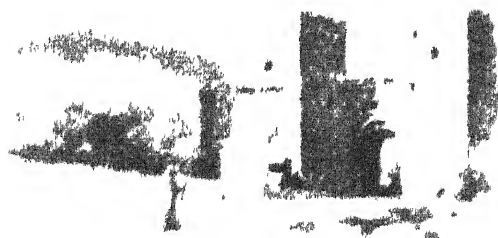
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When Jesus made a Grandmother well again



WHEN JESUS was on earth, there came a time when He needed no longer to spend His time at home with Mary and Joseph. There were other children to help in the carpenter's shop, and to do the work of the house, so Jesus left the little village where He had lived since He was a boy. He took long walks, and going from place to place He told people of the great God who loved them and cared for them.

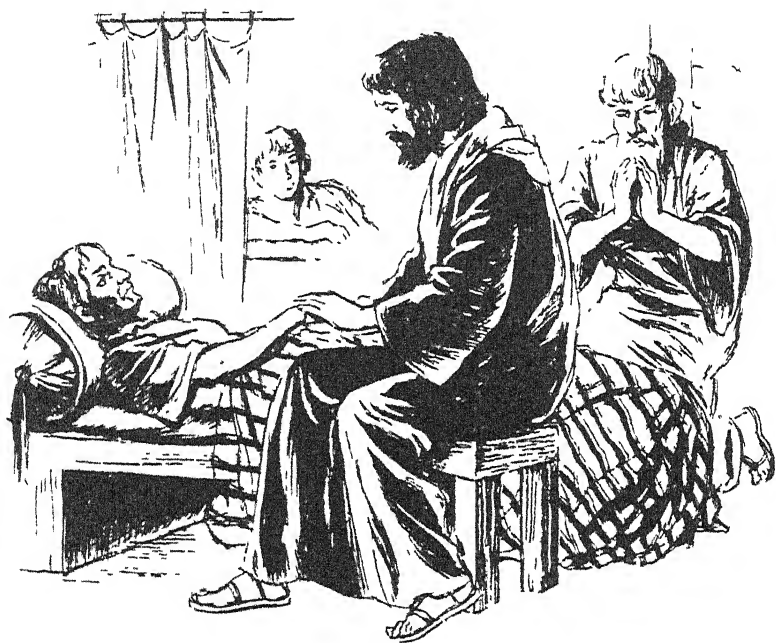
There were not many doctors in

Palestine, and lots of people were sick and ill. Jesus felt sorry for those poor people, and because He was so wonderful, He could often make them quite well again.

One Sunday, when the service in the Church was over, Jesus went home to dinner with a friend. The name of the friend was Simon Peter, and in Simon's house lived a dear old grandmother. She was always very busy, and loved helping with the cleaning and the cooking, but this day she was ill, and had to stay in bed. She was very, very hot and thirsty, and kept wanting cool things to drink. Have you ever felt like that?

When Jesus got to the house they told Him of this trouble, and He went at once and sat by the grandmother's bed. He took her hot hands in His cool ones—never saying a word—and presently the old lady felt calm and won-

derfully happy. They were quiet for a time, and then the granny said, "I'm better. I'm better!" You can guess how glad she felt, and how pleased to be able to get up and wait upon the kind visitor who could do such marvellous things.



That evening lots of poor, sick people came to Simon Peter's house, so



that Jesus could touch them too, and help them.

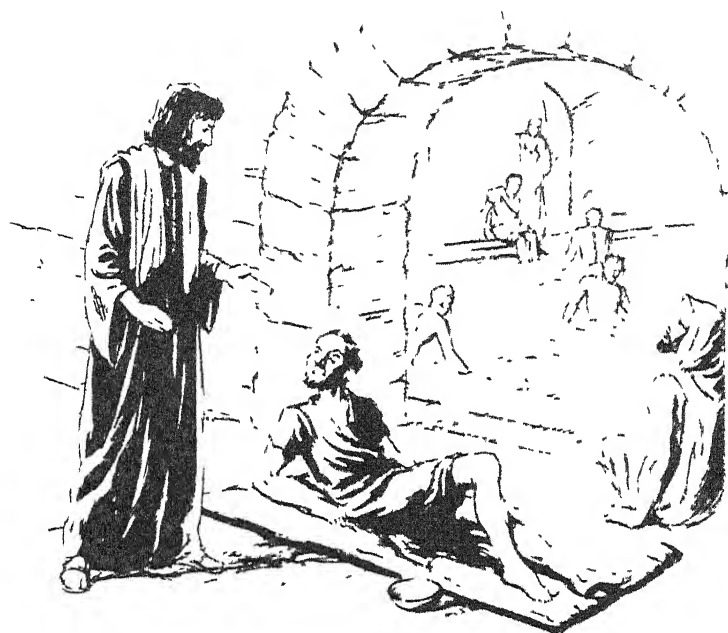
When at last all the sick people had been made well again and had gone to their own homes, Simon Peter shut the door and Jesus was able to rest. Then when morning came He awoke very early, and went from the house out into the open air. Jesus loved the trees and the flowers and in the quietness He said His prayers.

The Man at the Pool of Bethesda



ONE DAY Jesus went to Jerusalem, where a great festival was taking place. On His way to the Temple He passed a large pool—the pool of Bethesda. It had a kind of low wall around it, and in the wall were five little doorways leading down to the water. Springs of water ran down from the hills, and that made the water in the pool bubble and dance. It was clean, healing water, and in the five doorways there were always poor people waiting to go down

and bathe in the sparkling water, hoping that they would be cured of their illness.



As Jesus passed by He saw a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years. He stopped, and spoke to the man, and said to him, "Do you want to be well again?"

The man answered Jesus, "Yes, Sir, but I have no one to lift me into

the healing water. He was wondering whether Jesus would help him down the steps.

But Jesus did not need to do that. He said, "Get up, take your mat, and walk."

The man did as he was told, and from that moment he was cured.

Jesus went on His way to the Temple, and it was there that He met the man again. Jesus called to him, and said, "See, you are well and strong now. Use your time and your strength carefully, and do no wrong." Then it was that the man knew it was the great Teacher, Jesus, who had helped him.

Jesus had used His mighty power, and now the lame man had no need to sit at the pool of Bethesda any more.



When Jesus sailed in a Little Boat



IT WAS very hot in the land of Palestine where Jesus lived, and sometimes He was tired. When He needed to rest, His friends would row Him on the water, in one of their little fishing boats. The lakes were lovely places, and we can be sure that Jesus loved the cool breeze, and the sound of the waves lapping against the side of the boat. One day He was very sleepy, and in the quietness He lay down at the bottom of the boat, His head on a pillow, and

soon was fast asleep. The fishermen went on rowing, and when they were half-way across the lake a storm came on. The sky grew dark, and a sudden wind whipped up the little ripples until they were big, big waves. The small boat rocked about, but still Jesus slept on.

Then the friends of Jesus got frightened and worried. They felt that



soon the boat would be upset, and then they would all be thrown into the angry-looking water. So they called out, "Master, we are in great danger! Don't you care that this is happening to us?"

Jesus awoke then, and looked around at the tossing waves, and at the anxious faces turned to His. He said to the men, "Don't be fearful. Have faith in God who cares for you, and will look after you." Then He said, "Peace, be still."

It seemed to the frightened men that from that moment the storm began to lose its power, and soon the boat was in calm water again. In a few moments they were within sight of land. They looked at one another, saying, "The winds and the waves knew His voice!" How wonderful that seemed! Those fishermen felt that Jesus really was the greatest person who ever lived.

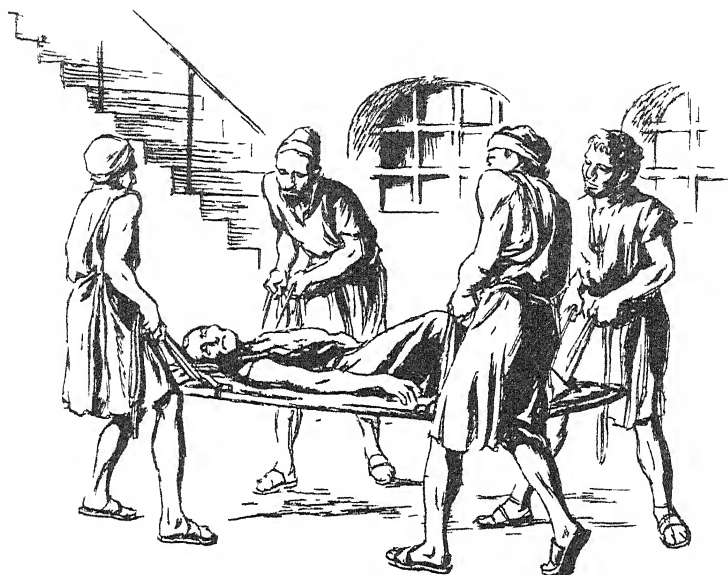


The Man with Four Friends



ONE DAY Jesus was invited to stay at the house of a rich man. The fine house had a little staircase at the side, and this led up to the roof of the house. The roof was flat.

When people heard that Jesus had come, they flocked to hear Him speak about God. He told men how God wished them to behave. While the people were listening four men drew near to the house. They were carrying a sick man who could not walk. The



man was lying on a mattress and the friends held the four corners. They carried the man very carefully, though it must have been a difficult job for them. They felt sure that if their sick friend could be brought to Jesus he would be cured. But what could they do now?

The house was crowded with people, and many were standing around the

door, too. The four friends decided that they would take the sick man up the little stairway on to the roof. When this was done they made a big hole in the roof and lowered the man on the bed right down into the room where Jesus was. How surprised Jesus must have been!

Jesus stopped speaking, and He looked at the man on the bed with kind, loving eyes. Then He said something which must have surprised the people standing near. "Forget about the wrong things you did in the past," he told the man. "All your sins are forgiven. Get up now, take your bed and go away to your own home." Jesus knew that the man was unhappy and ashamed, and that was why he was ill.

The man was able to do just as he was told, and all the people who looked on were quite astonished.



The Little Daughter of Jairus

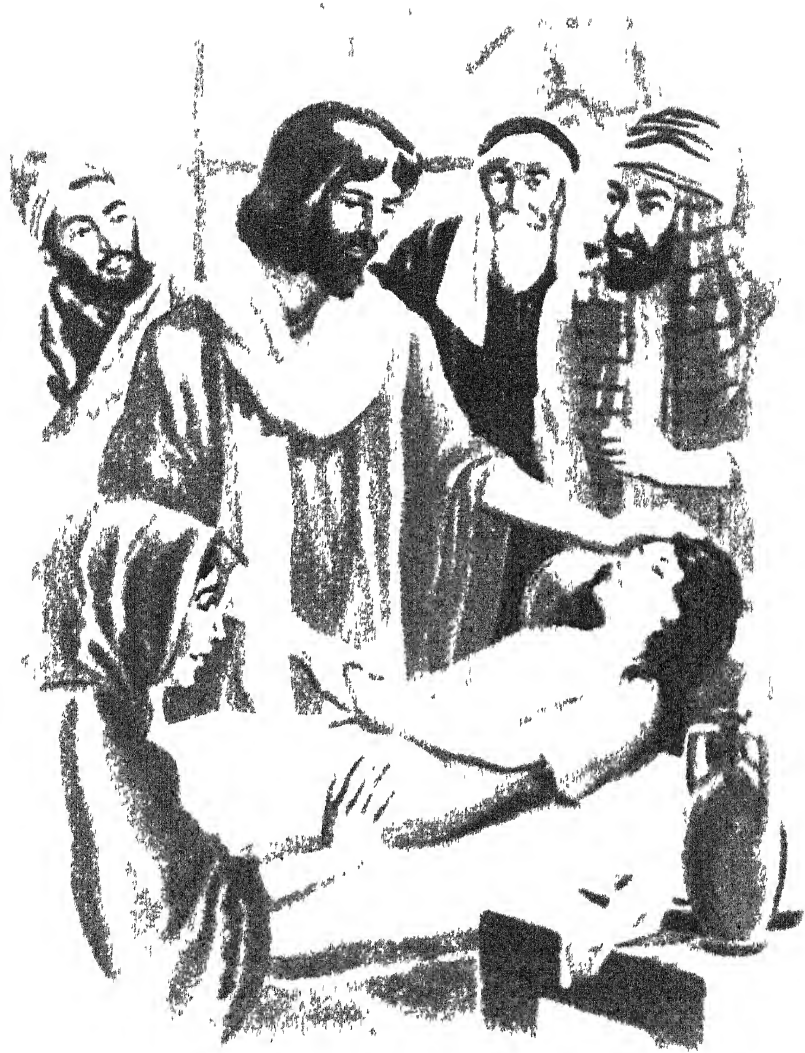


ONE DAY when Jesus crossed the lake, He stepped out of the boat, and found crowds of people there, waiting to see Him. Among them was a man named Jairus, who had a little girl aged twelve years. He loved his daughter very much, and was so happy when she laughed and played with her toys, and ran to meet him when he came home after his work. But now the little girl was ill. When Jairus saw Jesus he knelt at His feet, and said, " Do please come

to my little daughter. She is very ill. Come and touch her and speak to her, so that she will be quite well again."



It took Jesus and the father of the little girl quite a long time to get to the house. They were stopped on the way by other people who wanted to speak to Jesus. Then people came running to Jairus to say that the little girl



had died, but Jesus said to the father, "Have no fear." When He reached the house, He went into the little girl's room, taking with Him three of His friends, and the father and mother of the little girl. They found her lying in her bed, and she was very still and quiet.

Jesus said, "Why do you weep? The child is not dead, but asleep." The people listening would not believe this. Jesus took her by the hand, and gently stroked her soft, curly hair. After a while, He said to her, "Dear little girl, I am telling you to wake, and get up off your bed, and walk." The mother and father watched their little daughter, and how happy they were when she opened her eyes and smiled, and did as Jesus told her.

Jesus knew that now she was better she would be very hungry, so He told her mother to give her something to eat.

The Man who climbed into a Tree



THERE WAS once a man named Zaccheus. He was rather short, and not very nice-looking. Sometimes he felt rather lonely, and wished that he had lots of friends.

His job was not an easy one. He had to collect money for taxes from the people, and then pay this money over to the Roman landlords. Sometimes people felt quite sure he had taken too much money from them. That made them angry, so that they disliked Zac-

cheus and passed him in the street without speaking to him.

One day the people in the little town of Jericho, where Zaccheus lived, were very excited. They came out into the streets and stood in little groups. The children were there, too. Zaccheus listened to their talk, and he heard them say that Jesus, the beloved Teacher,



would soon pass that way. Zaccheus had heard about Jesus, how good and loving He was, and how He healed the sick people. He longed to see Him, but he knew he could not look over the shoulders of the tall people, because he was such a little man.

Zaccheus glanced around and saw a beautiful tree near by. It had a lovely, strong trunk which he could climb easily. Quickly he ran, climbed into the tree, and waited. Some time after, Jesus and His friends walked by, and Jesus looked up and saw Zaccheus. He stopped and said, "Zaccheus, come down now out of the tree. I should like to stay at your house to-day." Zaccheus was delighted, and he hurried away at once to make his house as nice as he could for this special guest.

We can imagine what a lovely time Zaccheus had when Jesus was at his house. Afterwards Zaccheus was so



happy that he promised to give away half of everything he had, to help people who were in want. He did this for the sake of his wonderful new Friend, Jesus.



Kind Deeds of Jesus



FIRST BIBLE STORIES: III

Kind Deeds of Jesus

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Feeding the People



THERE WAS once a boy who went to play by the lake of Galilee. He was old enough to go out alone, and his mother gave him some food in a little basket.

At first he ran about on the hillside, and then he decided to go down to the lake-side to look at the little waves, and watch the sparkling water. He was surprised that there were lots of people there waiting for a boat to come in to the shore. There were some boys and girls

in the crowd, one or two not much older than he was, and they told him, " We are waiting to see Jesus again. We want Him to talk to us, as He did this morning when we were on the other side of the lake."

The boy stood there, watching. Soon the boat reached the shore, and Jesus and his friends stepped out. Jesus would not disappoint the people who had come to meet Him, so for a long time He talked to them and told them stories. The boy listened too, and he was so interested that he forgot all about eating the little rolls and the fish in the basket that his mother had given him. Now the evening was coming on and it would soon be time to go home.

The friends of Jesus were asking their Master to send the crowds away, but Jesus knew that the people were tired and hungry. He told His friend, Andrew, and His other helpers to give



everyone in the crowd something to eat, but what lots and lots of food would have been needed to do that!

At last Jesus said, “How much food have you?” and Andrew went to Jesus and told Him, “There is a boy here with five little rolls and two small



fishes.” The boy felt glad that he had something to give and he handed the basket to Andrew.

Jesus listened, and then a wonderful thing happened. He told all the people to sit down on the grass, and when they had done so He took the food and looked up and thanked God for it. Then Jesus broke up the bread and the fish and it became enough to feed all the hungry people.

When the people had all eaten as much as they needed Jesus told His helpers to gather up the pieces left over so that nothing should be wasted. Perhaps the little boy helped, too. There was so much left that they put the spare food into twelve large baskets, ready to be used on another day.

Blind Bartimeus



ONCE THERE lived near Jericho a blind man named Bartimeus. He could not earn his living like other men, so every day he sat by the roadside and people passing by gave him little presents; from one a small coin, and from another, perhaps, something to eat.

Then it happened that Jesus visited Jericho, and leaving the town He walked along the road where Bartimeus sat. There were lots of people following Jesus, and the blind man heard the foot-

steps and the sound of voices. He asked a passer-by about the crowds, and he was told that it was Jesus who was passing by.



This made Bartimeus very excited because he knew that Jesus had made lame men walk, and blind men see. He called out loudly, "Jesus, have pity on me." The people who were there with Jesus were angry, and told Bartimeus to

be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me."

Then Jesus said, "Tell him to come to me." So they told the blind man, "Courage! Get up, He is calling you."

Bartimeus went to Jesus. When Jesus said, "What do you want me to do for you?" he answered, very earnestly, "Lord, if only I might see again." The people round about them were very quiet now, and they heard the kind voice of Jesus say, "Receive thy sight."

It was a wonderful moment for Bartimeus. He saw the trees, and the flowers and green grass. He looked at the people standing near, and most marvellous of all, he saw the face of Jesus. How happy he must have been!

Then Bartimeus went with Jesus, following Him as He walked along the road.



The Crippled Lady in the Synagogue



JESUS ALWAYS wished to help people who were ill or unhappy. Sometimes when He knew that they needed His help He gave it even before the sick people asked Him.

One day when Jesus was sitting in the synagogue—which is what the church was called—He looked around and noticed a poor lady whose back was very bent. She was so weak that she could never stand up straight, but had to walk about with her eyes



all the time looking at the ground.

Jesus called her to His side, and He touched her poor, crooked back with His hands. Immediately the stiffness passed away, and then, for the first time in eighteen years, she was able to stand up with her back quite straight and strong! How glad she was! She looked at the loving face of Jesus, and then, in a happy voice, she thanked God that she was free of the pain she had felt for so long.

The people who had seen all that happened were delighted, but some of the rulers of the synagogue were jealous because Jesus was able to do such marvellous things.



The Ten Lepers



ONE DAY Jesus was going towards a little village in Galilee, and as He walked along He saw some small huts in an out-of-the-way place. These huts were the homes of some poor men who had an illness called leprosy. The men were called lepers, and they had a sad, lonely life. People would not go near them in case they, too, became ill with leprosy.

The lepers had heard about Jesus, and they knew that He often cured sick

people. When they saw Him they stood a long way off, but they called out loudly, just as Bartimeus had done, and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."



Jesus felt sorry for the ten poor men who were lepers, and He made them well again. They ran quickly away, no doubt thinking of the joy of seeing their families and friends again. In the excitement they forgot all about Jesus. That is, all except just one of the men. After a while he came running back alone, and he knelt at the feet of Jesus, thanking Him for using His mighty power to cure his illness, and showing Him how happy he was to be well again.

Jesus looked kindly at the man, and then He said, "Ten men were cured of their illness, but where are the other nine?"

He spoke rather sadly. He was sorry that the nine men forgot to say "Thank you."



When Jesus Helped at a Party

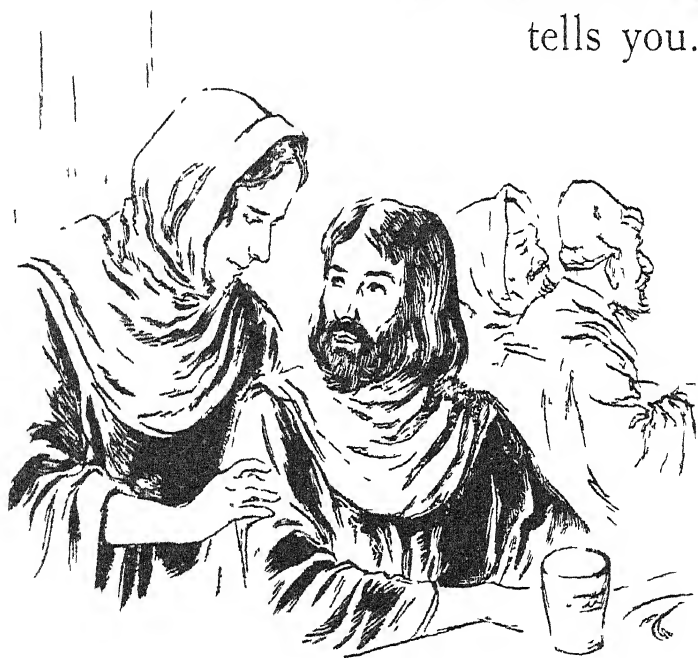


THERE WAS a day when Jesus and His friends were invited to a wedding party. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there, too. The people who had arranged the party were pleased to see Jesus and His friends there as guests. He was just the very best person to have at a party, because He knew how to make other people happy.

There were good things to eat and wine to drink, but so many folk had come to the wedding that soon the wine

was almost finished. Mary, the mother of Jesus, found out about this, and at once she decided to tell her Son, for she felt that He would know just what to do.

When Mary had spoken to Jesus she said to the servants,
“Do whatever He tells you.”



Now near the door were six great stone water-pots. They were kept there



filled with water so that people could wash their hands, and cool their dusty feet. Just then the water-pots were empty, and calling one of the servants Jesus said, " Fill the pots with water."

The guests were busy eating and talking so they did not notice what was happening, but Mary watched it all with a smile because she felt sure that Jesus was going to help. When the water-pots were filled to the brim Jesus said, " Pour out now."

Well, the servants remembered what Mary had said, so they started pouring out into the wine-cups. To their great surprise they saw that it was water no longer, but beautiful, sparkling wine.

There was plenty for everyone now, and the wine that Jesus had made from the water was even better than the wine the guests had first been drinking.

The friends of Jesus loved to talk about this wonderful deed.

The Children Jesus Blessed



TWO MOTHERS were talking together one day. They were speaking of Jesus, and they were planning to take their boys and girls to see Him. They knew Jesus cared for little children and often called them to His side. The mothers said, "Surely He will notice our boys and girls and put His kind arms around them."

When they were all quite ready for the long walk they set off. They were glad when they came to the place where

Jesus was, because some of the tiny children were getting tired.

It was a pity that the people who were with Jesus seemed quite cross!



When the mothers explained why they had come, they were told, "Jesus is busy. He is too tired to be bothered with these children. Go away." How sad they felt! They were preparing to start on the homeward journey, but Jesus had noticed them, and He smiled and said, "Let the children come to me," and holding out His arms He invited them to run to Him. Now everything was happy again, and all the disappointment was forgotten.

Jesus sat there with the smaller ones in His arms, and the others leaning against Him. What a happy time they had as He spoke to them, and they talked to Him and showed Him their toys.

Then he put His hand on the head of each in turn and gave them His blessing. I am sure that even the tiny ones never forgot that day.

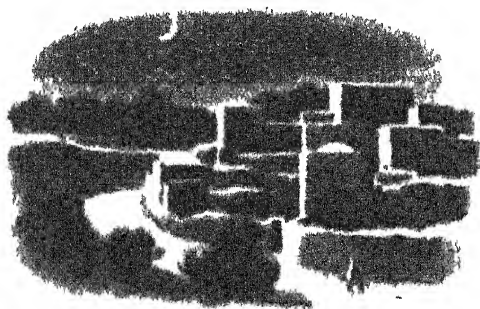
Stories Jesus Told



FIRST BIBLE STORIES: IV

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT
RETOLD BY

STEPHEN M. BOICE



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The Foolish Son



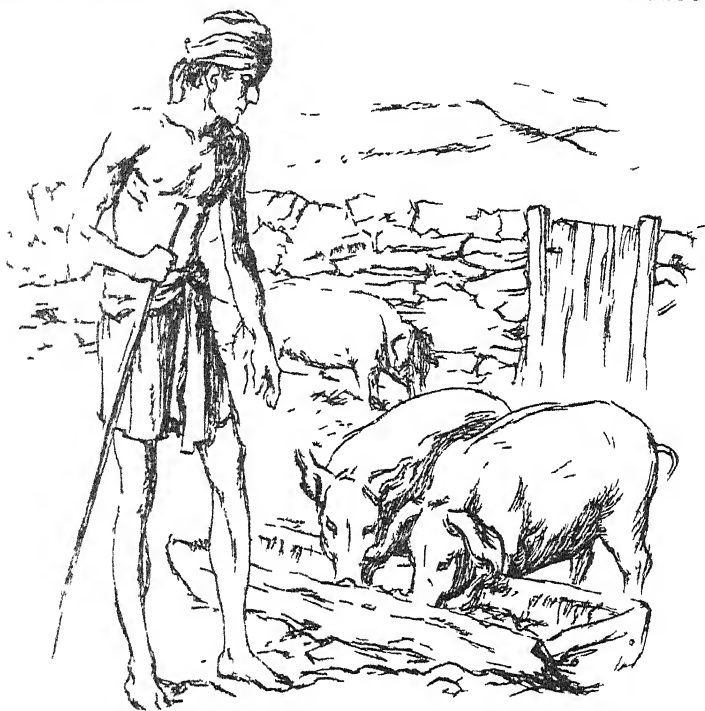
WHEN JESUS walked through the fields and visited the little villages of Palestine, people gathered around Him to hear Him speak. He often told them beautiful stories, and they were always very glad to listen. Perhaps the best story of all was the tale of a father and his two sons.

This father was a rich man, who loved both his sons very much. They had lived happily together until one day the younger son asked his father to



give him money so that he could go away. He wanted to see the world. The father was sorry to part from his boy, but he did as he was asked to do, and soon afterwards the son said, "Good-bye," and went away. For a time he enjoyed his new life very much. He spent his time with idle, wasteful people, and did not think much about his father, or his home. He wasted so much money and time that he is called a "prodigal".

After a while his money was all gone, and then he had to find work, in order to buy food. A farmer took him to work on his farm, but did not give him much to eat. When he looked



at the meals prepared for the pigs in the sty, he sometimes felt tempted to take a little of the food for himself. He was often hungry.



He began to think of his father and his home, and one day he decided to go back and tell his father how sad he was now. He started on the long walk back home. Then at last he came to a place where he could see, far away, his father's house. He began to hurry, but before he got near his father saw him coming. He was not a bit angry with the son who had left him so long, but called out to his servants, and told them to get a lovely meal ready, and to put out some clean, beautiful clothes. Then he rushed out to meet his son. The father said, "My son was lost, and is found again."

Jesus told the story because He wanted people to know that God is just like that loving Father.

The Good Samaritan



BETWEEN Jerusalem and Jericho in the land where Jesus lived there was a lonely road. Jesus once told the story of how one day a man was walking along this road when he was ill-treated and beaten by wicked people, who stole his money and left him lying on the ground badly hurt.

After the poor man had been lying there for some time a priest passed by. He looked at the wounded man, and felt that he ought to help him. But he

said to himself, "If I touch him, I shall make my hands dirty and my clothes will be soiled." So he went on his way.

An hour or two passed, and then another man came to the place. He also served in the Temple; he was a Levite. He looked at the wounded man, but he thought, "If I stay here, I may be hurt, too. Even now, it will be dark before I get home."



And so he passed by on the other side.
How unkind these two men were!

Then when the man who was lying on the ground had almost given up hope of being rescueded, a third man—of the country of Samaria—came along. Now, when he saw what had happened he quickly got down from his donkey, and bound up the cuts and bruises of the man who had been hurt. He lifted him on to the donkey's back, and very soon they were at the nearest village, where the Samaritan asked an innkeeper to care for the wounded man. He said, "Here is money, and if you spend more in caring for him, I will repay you when I come this way again."

Most of the Jews disliked the Samaritans but this Samaritan showed that they were often really good kind men.



The Bags of Money



JESUS ONCE told a story about a man who went away on a long journey to a far-off land.

Before he left, this man called three of his servants and gave them some money to use for him. He gave the first man ten bags of money, the second man five bags of money, and the third man one bag of money, telling the men to use the money wisely for him while he was away.

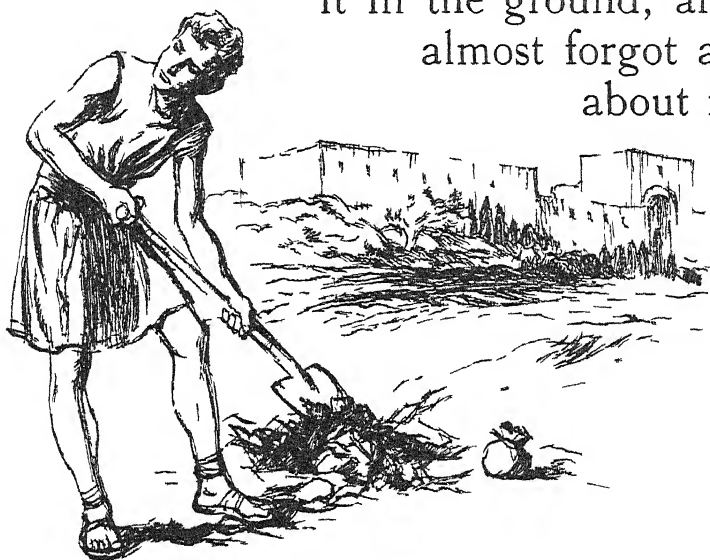
The man with the ten bags of





money, and the man with the five bags of money wasted no time, but began to work at once. Perhaps they used their money to buy things to sell in a shop, or they may have bought wood to make things people needed. Very soon they had doubled the money given to them to use.

The third servant was a lazy man. What do you think he did? He wrapped up his bag of money, buried it in the ground, and almost forgot all about it.



One day the master came home again. He called the three men, and when he heard what the first and second men had done he was very pleased. He said to them, " Well done, my good and faithful servants."

The third man was standing there, and I think that he began to be sorry. He wished that he had not been lazy. But it was too late, and there was nothing he could do. He dug up the money, and handed it back to his master, just as he had received it.

His master was disappointed, and took the bag of money away from him. Then he gave it to the faithful man who had made his ten bags into twenty bags.



The House Built on Sand



PERHAPS you have seen a house being built, and you know how the builders make nice, strong walls of bricks or stones, and then put a roof on to keep out the rain. Jesus told a story about two men, who had both decided to build a house.

The first man was very careful, and looked about for a good place to put his house. He knew that a house must have something really strong underneath it. This man found rock beneath the

ground and felt that it would be good to build his house there. First of all he had to cut away some of the rock until it was level, and after that he built the walls, made the window spaces, and put on the roof.



The second man was in a great hurry, and he laughed at the builder who was working so hard and so carefully. Without thinking very much he



chose a spot where the ground was soft and easy to dig, and so he was able to begin building very quickly.

The day came when both the houses were finished. But while they were empty, before people came to live in the new houses, a great storm arose. All night long the rain fell, and the wind blew very, very hard. Water rushed along the gutters and found its way into the houses. When the morning came, the house built on the rock was standing there quite firmly in spite of the storm. But the other house—the house that had been built quickly and carelessly—was in a sad state. It leaned to one side, and all the parts of the building were loose. It was no good now to shelter a family. The careless builder had to begin his house all over again.

The Lost Sheep



WHEN JESUS was a boy He often watched the shepherds on the hill-sides caring for the sheep and lambs. Many years later He told a story about a shepherd who had one hundred sheep.

This kind man was kept very busy looking after his large flock. During the day he led them to places where they could find fresh grass to eat, and water to drink. The sheep wandered about, but the shepherd watched; when they strayed too far, he would go after them

and bring them back. At night he brought them together in one place, and there he would light a fire to scare off any animal who might harm the sheep. Later, he would lie down, wrapped in his shepherd's cloak, and sleep until morning.





One evening he collected his sheep before the sun went down, and began to count them as he always did, one, two, three. The good shepherd found that he had only ninety-nine, and he was sad when he found that one sheep was missing. He shut the gate of the field carefully, and went off to search, although by this time it was beginning to be dark.

The shepherd went up and down the hillsides, listening, and calling to the poor, silly sheep who had roamed away from the safe place. Thorns scratched his face and hands, and his sandals were cut by rough stones, but still he went on.

Then, when he was very tired, the shepherd heard the bleating of the lost sheep, and soon the search was over. He forgot his long walk, and picking up the sheep he laid it on his shoulders and took it back. He was very happy that he had found the missing one, and rejoiced to take it safely home.

The Fig Tree



IN THE BIBLE there is a story told by Jesus of a man who had a beautiful garden called a vineyard. Grapes grew there, and also other lovely fruits and flowers. The man who owned the garden kept a gardener to care for the vines and the trees, and to spend long, sunny days tending the growing things.

In the good, dark earth the gardener one day planted a little fig tree. It grew tall and straight and it was very healthy, so that one would have expected to find

figs growing among the green leaves. But when the gardener and the master looked there were not any.



“It is not a very large tree,” said the gardener. “Wait until next year, and no doubt we shall find some fruit.”

But when harvest came round again the gardener looked once more at the tree, now grown much bigger, and still there were no figs. The owner of the garden was very disappointed when he was told about it.



After another year had gone by the gardener and his master came for the third time, and now the owner of the vineyard was angry because the tree was still without figs, and he ordered the gardener to cut it down. But the gardener pleaded for the tree, and asked the master to leave it for just one more year. The gardener promised to dig around the tree, and give it special care. We do not know how the story ended, but we like to think that the tree had lots of figs at the next harvest-time and that it was not cut down.

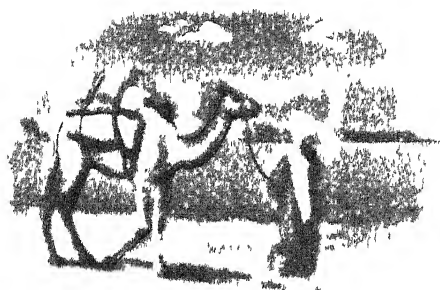
Jesus told the story to remind people that God is like that gardener. He cares for people and is very patient with them, giving them many chances to work for Him.

Friends of Jesus



FIRST BIBLE STORIES: V

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT
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John the Baptist



THERE WERE some people who were special friends of Jesus, when He was here on earth, and in this book we shall hear of them.

First, his cousin John. John was three months older than Jesus, and I think we may be sure that when they were little boys there were times when they played together.

When John grew up he was big and strong. He dressed in a rough coat made of camel-hair, with a leather belt

around his waist. He went for long walks in lonely places, where there were hills and rocks but no houses or people.

Then John became a preacher, and crowds went to hear him speak. He would start all his talks by telling people to be sorry for their bad ways. He asked them to use their time properly. Some people listened to John and felt sorry for the days when they had not behaved well, pleasing themselves, with no thought of God, their Heavenly Father. John took these people down to a quiet part of the River Jordan, and he dipped them one by one into the stream. This was called baptizing them. It was a sign that just as the water washed their dusty feet and made their hands and faces clean again, so God had washed away their wrong-doing because they asked Him, and were truly sorry for the bad things they had done in the past.



After they had been baptized they asked John what they should do. He told some that they should share their clothes and food with people in need. To others he said, "Don't take from people more money than they owe you," and he warned soldiers, saying, "Don't be cruel to anyone."

John surprised the people very much by telling them that someone good and holy, much better than himself, would come after him. He said, " I am not even fit to stoop down and undo His shoes."

It was a little while after this that Jesus, who had left His home to begin His work of teaching and healing, came to John and told him that He, too, wished to be baptized. John looked at Jesus, and saw in His face kindness and love. He felt that here was someone who had always done good things and had nothing to be sad about. John said to Jesus, " It is you who should baptize me." But because He wished it, John baptized Jesus in the River Jordan.

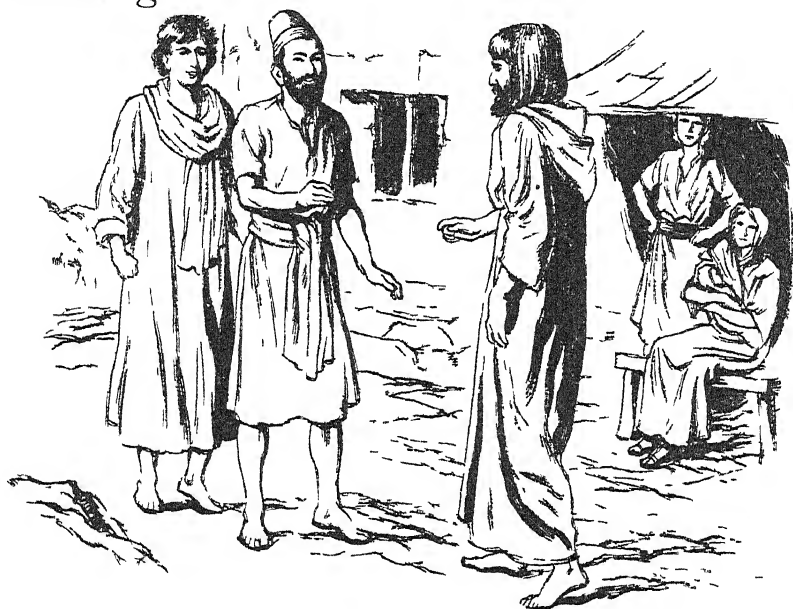


Andrew and his Brother

WHEN JESUS grew up He left His home at Nazareth and began His great work of teaching and healing. For a time He was quite alone without any friends and helpers, but one day two young men who had listened to Him speaking followed Him as He walked along a village street. Jesus turned round and spoke to them, asking them why they followed him.

They said, quickly, " Master, we should like to know where you live."

Jesus smiled, and replied, "Why not come and see?" The two young men went with Jesus and had a lovely visit. They stayed a long time—until it was evening.



One of the young men was named Andrew, and he was so glad about his splendid new friend that he rushed straight home afterwards. He went into the house and called out to his brother, "Simon! Simon! Listen to me. I have



had a wonderful time today, and I wish that you had been with me. I have found the great teacher we have all been waiting for. He will show us all how to be very happy, and He is so great that He has power to heal the sick and make the blind see. Do let me take you to the place where He is, so that you may know Him too."

Andrew took Simon to Jesus. He was glad to do this. He loved his brother and wanted him to share the wonderful friendship of Jesus, just as we wish to share our best things with people we love.

After this Andrew and Simon saw Jesus many times. They were fishermen, but later they gave up their fishing and went with Jesus to help Him in His work. When this happened they were called disciples of Jesus because they were taught by Him, and tried to copy His wonderful ways.

Simon Peter, James and John

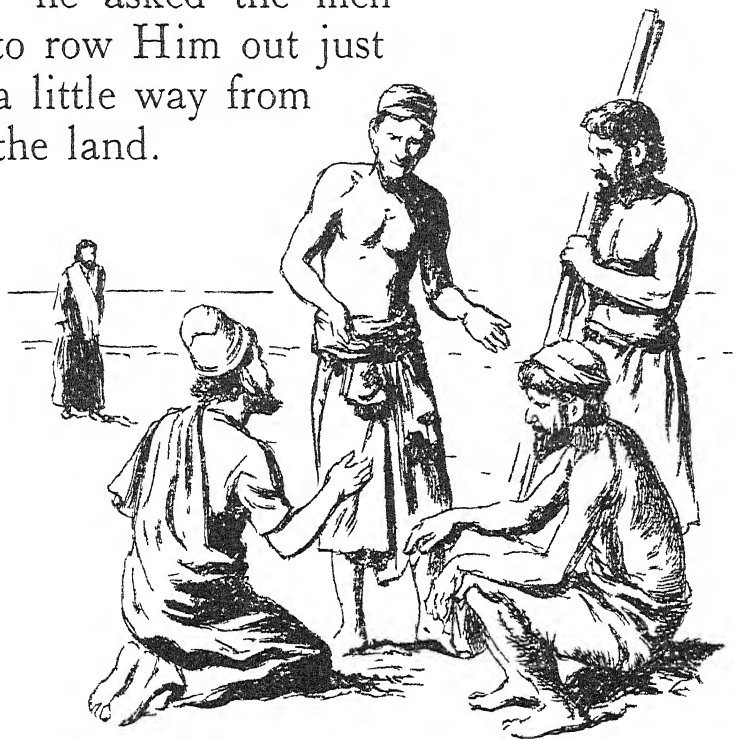


ANDREW AND SIMON had two friends who were brothers named James and John. The four young men often sailed their boats together on the lake and they would share the fish they caught. One day they were all on the shore washing and mending their nets. They were not feeling very happy, for although they had sailed about all night on the Lake of Gennesaret they had come back to land without any fish.

“Today,” they told one another

sadly, " we shall have nothing to sell."

As they were working Jesus came near, walking on the sea-shore. How glad they were to see Him! It helped them to forget their wasted night. Jesus saw the empty boats and stepping into one of them — it belonged to Simon — he asked the men to row Him out just a little way from the land.



In this way He could teach the people without being pressed by the crowd which soon gathered wherever He went. Now He sat down in the boat and talked, and all the people listened gladly.

Afterwards Jesus told Simon to take his boat into deeper water and let down a net to catch the fish which Jesus knew would be found there. Simon did not expect to catch any fish in the daytime while the sun was shining brightly, but he said to Jesus, " Master, we have toiled all night and have taken nothing; but at your word I will let down the net."

This time everything was different. The net filled so quickly that it began to break with the weight. Simon and Andrew called to James and John, asking them to help. There were so many fish that both the boats were filled and it seemed almost as though they would sink.

Simon was frightened, and felt that



he was not good enough to be one of the friends of Jesus, but Jesus spoke kindly to the young fisherman and said a rather surprising thing, "Fear not, from now on you shall catch men." He meant that in time to come Simon would help many people to know and love God.

Jesus gave Simon a new name and afterwards he was called Simon Peter. He invited the four young men to go with Him and help Him with His work. So there and then they left their fishing-boats and began a new life.



Mary and Martha

OFTEN, AS JESUS journeyed through the land of Palestine he found kind, friendly people, who were delighted when He went to stay with them.

At Bethany lived two sisters, Mary and Martha, and when Jesus passed by on His way to Jerusalem he usually visited them. Mary was a quiet, gentle person who thought a great deal about Jesus and His wonderful work. Martha was always busy, and she worked hard



to make a comfortable home for Mary and herself, and their brother Lazarus. Martha also loved Jesus very much, just as Mary did.

One day Mary and Martha heard that Jesus was coming to their village. Early in the morning Mary went out and picked flowers to make the house gay, and then she sat watching for Jesus to appear. Martha had been up early, too, but she spent the morning hours sweeping and cleaning, and afterwards she began to cook the loveliest meal she could think of.

At last Jesus came, and Mary was at the door to welcome Him. She brought Him in and sat near him listening to His words. But poor Martha was hot and tired, and rather worried because the meal was not quite ready. Somehow this made her feel cross with Mary, and presently she rushed into the place where Mary sat with Jesus, and said,

“ Lord, is it nothing to you that my sister has left me to do all the work alone. Tell her to come and help me.”

This was rather rude and unkind of Martha, and Jesus said,

“ Martha, Martha, you are anxious about so many things. Just one thing—one dish—would have been quite enough. Mary was right in wishing to have time to hear what I have to say to her.”

We know that Jesus loved both the sisters, though they were not at all alike. Before long Martha's ill-temper was forgotten, and Mary and her sister had a happy time with their friend, Jesus.



Nicodemus



IN THE BIBLE there are many stories of people who came to Jesus to ask Him questions, or to get His help. This is the story of someone who came to Jesus by night.

It was quite dark and Jesus was resting in the house where He was staying. Then a tapping sound was heard. The door was shut, and everyone else was in bed, but Jesus opened the door. Standing there was an important man who helped to make the laws of

the land, one of the Jewish rulers, who were called Pharisees. His name was Nicodemus. He had come specially to see Jesus, and Jesus spoke kindly to him and asked him into the house.

Nicodemus had heard Jesus before as He preached to the people, and he had seen the wonderful healing power He used so lovingly. They talked together for a long time, and at last Nicodemus said, humbly, " Master, we know that You have come from God to teach us, for no one could do the miracles that You do, unless God were with him." If Nicodemus had asked Him, Jesus might have allowed him to become one of His disciples, and what a happy thing that would have been.

Nicodemus came to visit Jesus when it was night because he was afraid of what the other Jewish rulers would think and say. It was a secret visit. The other Pharisees were jealous of Jesus and



would have been angry with Nicodemus for visiting Him.

You may think that Nicodemus was not a special friend of Jesus, and did not love Him as Mary or Simon Peter did. But we know that Nicodemus must have thought a lot about Jesus after his visit to Him that dark night, and he cared about Him, because later on he spoke up for Jesus when unkind men were trying to do Him harm.



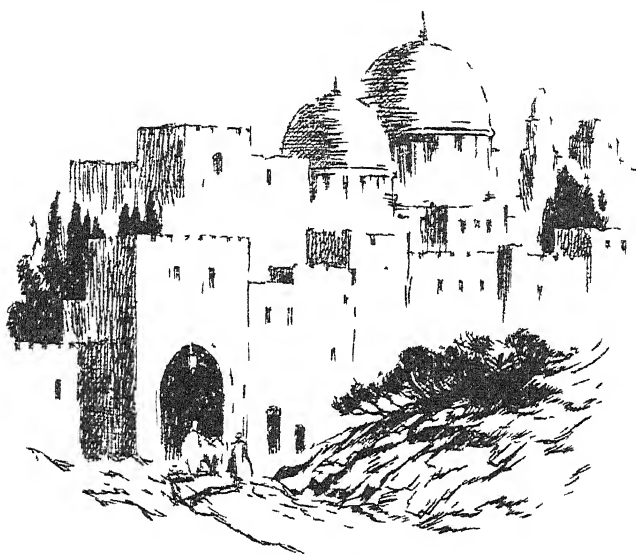
The Jar of Ointment



THERE WAS a day when a man named Simon, one of the Pharisees, invited Jesus to his house to dinner. The news that He was there spread quickly, and one of those who found out was a woman who had done a great many wrong things in her lifetime. She slipped in through the open door, and found her way to where Jesus was sitting. She wanted to give Him a present. She was very lonely and unhappy, and at first she stood behind Him

woman had behaved in quite a different way, and had shown him how much she loved Him.

Jesus knew that the woman with the lovely jar of ointment had many faults, but because she really loved Jesus He forgave her for her bad ways in the past and she went away from Simon's house making up her mind to be good ever after.



•

Lessons Jesus Taught



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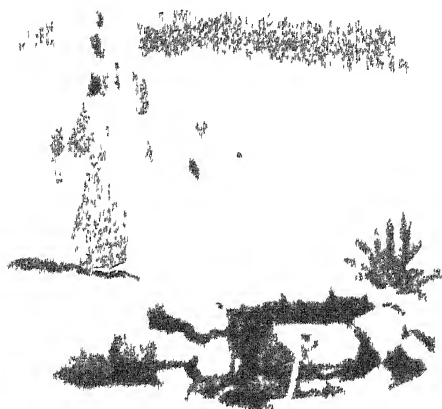
FIRST BIBLE STORIES VI .

LESSONS FOR CHILDREN

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

RETOLD BY

ETHEL POICE



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When pride made Jesus sorry



IF WE HAD lived in Palestine long ago we might have seen Jesus and His friends, the disciples, as they went from place to place, walking through the cornfields or along the dusty roads. One day Jesus heard the disciples talking among themselves as they drew near to Him. It sounded almost as though they were quarrelling. He listened, and found that they were trying to decide who among them was the most important person.

Jesus looked at them sadly. Then He told them that the person who wished to be truly great must not think of himself at all, but, instead, he must be willing to be the servant of the others. Jesus reminded His friends that He, Himself, had come into the world to love and serve others.

Soon after this when He was sitting at supper with the disciples He rose from the table and took off His outer clothes and picking up a towel He fastened this around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to dry them with the towel. After He had finished He put on His robe again and went back to His place. He asked them,

“ Do you know why I have been doing this? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right; that is what I am. If I then wash your feet, you

ought also to do this for one another.”

In this way Jesus taught His friends to remember that they were to work for one another gladly, without stopping to think who was the greatest or most important person.



Breakfast on the Sea-shore



JESUS WAS once parted from His friends for a little while. They felt unhappy and lonely without Him, and one day Simon Peter said, "I am going fishing." The others were pleased, and said, "We will come too," so they took a boat and started away. (The disciples were poor men, and they needed to catch fish to sell and to use for food.) They rowed out into deep water and let down their nets, but all that night they caught nothing.

They were delighted when presently the net began to fill with fish, and one of the men in the boat who was a favourite disciple of Jesus, said joyfully, "It is the Lord." When Simon Peter heard this he sprang up with a glad cry. He quickly put on his fisher's coat, and he was so excited that he jumped into the water and swam to the shore.

The others came to land in the boat, dragging the net with the fishes after them. There were one hundred and fifty-three fishes in the net and you might have thought it would have been broken with the weight, but it was not damaged at all.

It was wonderful to see Jesus again! Though they were tired after the night in the fishing-boat they were very happy, and how lovely it was to see a fire burning on the sea-shore with fish cooking, and some bread. It seemed to them rather like a specially happy picnic and they

all felt glad when Jesus said, "Come to breakfast."

After the meal Jesus talked to Simon Peter. He said, "Simon, do you love me?" Simon said, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus asked the same question three times and then He told Simon Peter that he must go on caring for people, and teaching them about God.



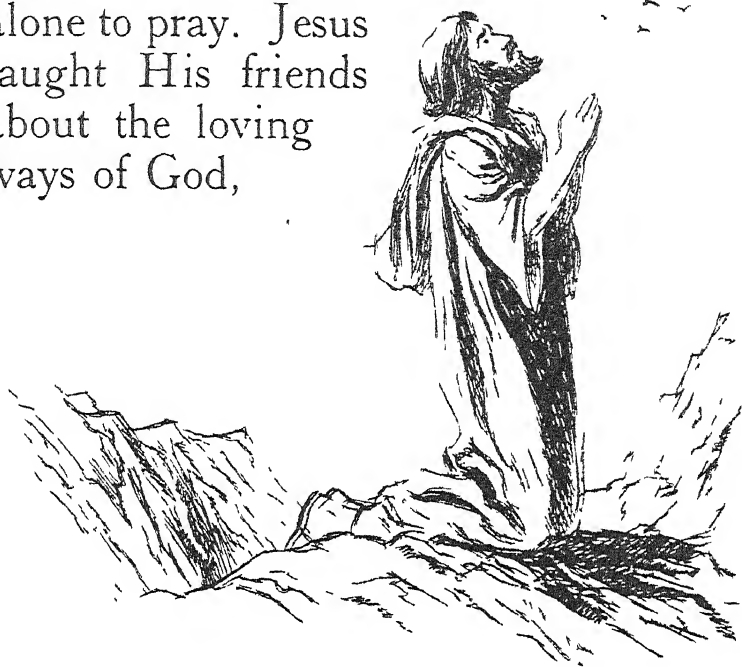
The Disciples learn to Pray



ONCE, WHEN the disciples were tired, Jesus took them to a quiet place for a holiday. He said, "Come away, and rest for a time."

It was not surprising that Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John and the others, loved Jesus and watched all that He did. They noticed that He was careful to say His prayers, and they knew that after His prayers Jesus was rested and happy. Once Jesus sent His disciples on before Him while He went

up into a mountain
alone to pray. Jesus
taught His friends
about the loving
ways of God,



who cares for everyone and everything,
even tiny sparrows. He told them to look
at the lovely flowers of the fields, so
beautiful that their colours were brighter
than the tints of a king's robe, and He
reminded the disciples that God who
made the flowers so wonderfully would
surely care for men and women and boys



and girls, and would listen to their prayers.

One day Jesus had been saying His prayers, and when He had finished one of the disciples said to Him, “ Lord, teach us to pray.”

Jesus taught His friends the prayer which we say like this.

Our Father, which art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is
in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we
forgive them that trespass against
us.

And lead us not into temptation, but
deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, the
power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.

Amen.

The rich young Ruler



WHEN JESUS was walking along a road one day, he saw a young man running towards Him. The young man knelt down before Jesus, and said, "Good teacher, tell me please, what must I do to be sure of living for ever in the beautiful world beyond this one?" Jesus stopped to speak to the young man. He reminded him of the commandments to be found in the Bible. He was to love God with all his heart, and he was to be obedient to his mother and father.

He was not to steal or cheat. There were other things, too, which the young man needed to remember, and when Jesus had spoken of them all the young man replied, " Master, I have kept all these rules carefully since I was quite young."



Jesus looked kindly at him, and loved him very much. Then he said, " There

is one thing you need to do.. Sell everything you have, give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven. After that come back and join me."

Now if the young man had really loved God with all his heart he would have cheerfully sold his big house and his fine clothes, but when Jesus asked him to do this he felt most disappointed. He was very rich, and could not bear the thought of giving up everything that he had.

The story tells us that he went away feeling sad. We do not know whether he changed his mind later and did as Jesus wished him to do, but we like to think that that is perhaps what happened.



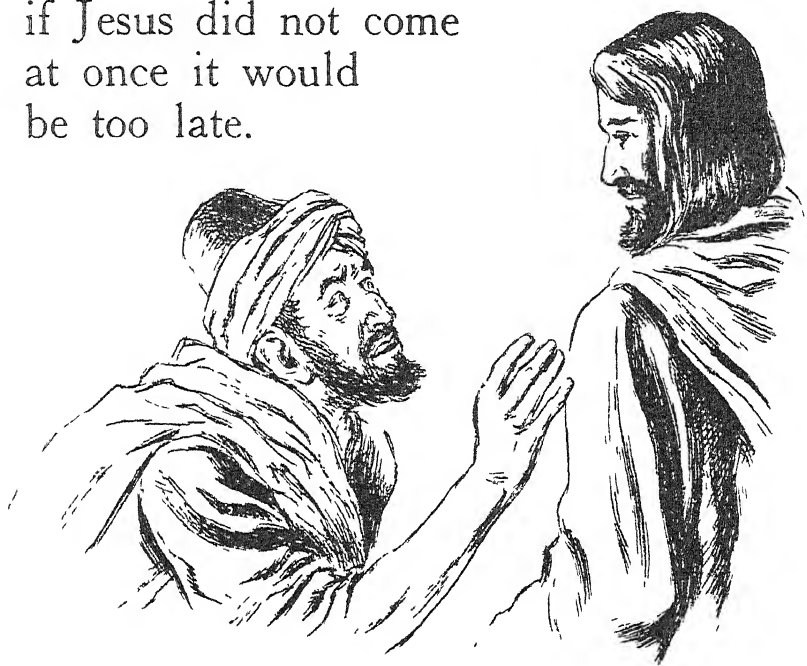
A Nobleman's Son



A RICH NOBLEMAN, who had a post in a royal household, was in great trouble. He had a son who was lying very ill at Capernaum. When the father heard one day that Jesus had come into Galilee he went to Him asking Him to visit his son and make him well and strong again.

Jesus listened to the story and His heart was full of pity, but he could not help sighing as He said sadly to the father, " Unless you see miracles you

will not believe in my teaching.”
The nobleman felt that
if Jesus did not come
at once it would
be too late.



He pleaded with Jesus, “ Come down,
sir, before my boy dies.”

Then Jesus said, with a kind smile,
“ There is no need for me to come. You
may go yourself. I have made your son
quite well.”

What a wonderful thing for Jesus

to say! Would the father believe what Jesus had told him? Yes, he did, and he started at once on the journey to the house where his son was. And as he went he said to himself, "Jesus said that my boy is better. It is true. He has made my son well without even seeing him or touching him."

His servants met him on the road with the joyful news that his son was alive and well. The father asked them eagerly at what time the illness had left him, and they told him "Yesterday at one o'clock." It was just then that the words of Jesus had been spoken

What a glad day that was! Where there had been sadness and pain there was now nothing but happiness.

The nobleman and all who lived in his house worshipped and believed in Jesus. "He must be the Son of God," they said, "to be able to do such wonderful things."



The best Gift of All



JESUS LOVED to go to the great church called the Temple, and one day He was there with His friends, the disciples. They sat near the Treasury. This was the name given to a very large money-box which was used for holding the presents people brought to the Temple.

Rich people came and went and some put into the box golden coins, and others gave lots of silver. Presently there came near a woman in shabby





clothes. She lived all alone and was very poor. She stood close to the place where Jesus was seated and she watched the well-dressed people putting their offerings into the Treasury. Because she loved God and knew that some of the money was used to keep His House clean and beautiful she wished that she, too, could give lots of money. But her purse was almost empty. Before she came to the Temple that day she had looked inside and there was nothing there except two little coins. They were called mites, and together they were worth about a halfpenny. The woman who was so poor held them in her hand for a moment, and then she slipped them into the Treasury and hurried away.

Jesus had seen all that had happened, and calling His disciples to Him, He told them about the gift of the two little pieces of money.

Jesus said that the poor woman's

gift was the best of all the presents put into the Treasury. That seemed a strange thing to say, when we remember the gold and all the silver, but Jesus went on to explain that the other people had put in money that they could spare—they had lots left to spend upon themselves—but the woman, who was a widow, had given all that she had.

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FIRST BIBLE STORIES VII

Working For Jesus

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT
RETOLD BY
ETHEL M. BOYCE



ILLUSTRATED BY R G CAMPBELL

BLACKIE & SON LIMITED . LONDON AND GLASGOW

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A Gift from God



WHEN JESUS left his friends, the disciples, and went back to God His Father, Peter and John and the others stayed at Jerusalem. Jesus had told them that He had special work for them to do. They were to go out into the world and teach people everywhere, telling them about the love of God. But before they began this work, they needed to have the gift of God's power, and Jesus had promised that this would be sent to them. That is why they were

waiting at Jerusalem. Jesus had said, too, "I shall be with you wherever you go." So although the disciples could not see Jesus they knew that He was near them.

On the day of Pentecost—the day we call Whit-Sunday—the disciples and some of their friends had arranged to meet together, and after they met and while they talked they heard a sound



like a sudden gale of wind, and looking around they noticed a bright, beautiful light which seemed to rest on the head of each one of them. Now they felt strong and brave and they knew that Jesus had kept His word and sent them the promised gift. How joyful they were!



•
In Jerusalem at that time were many people who had come from far away to the Pentecost services in the Temple, and some heard the sound of the rushing wind and went to see what had happened. They met the disciples coming out into the street, and Peter and John and the others began at once to talk to these visitors, telling them the story of Jesus. That day great crowds of men and women decided to become followers of Jesus, promising to live as He would have wished.

It was a wonderful time. The disciples, and all the new friends of Jesus met every day in the Temple, and in one another's houses, too, talking of Jesus and thinking of ways to serve Him. They decided to share everything, and when they saw people in need they sold something so that there was money to give away.



The Man at the Beautiful Gate



LATE ONE DAY when Peter and John were on their way to the Temple in Jerusalem to join in the evening prayers, they saw, seated by the gate called Beautiful, a poor man who had been lame all his life. He sat there every day calling to the people who went into the Temple, begging them to give him money. When Peter and John passed by he hoped that they would give him something.

The disciples were not rich men with

lots of money. They had left their work to spread the good news about Jesus, their Master, and often they were in need of food and clothes themselves. But they had something much more precious than money: they had the wonderful gift of God's Power which had been sent to them. It made them able to do great things.

Peter looked kindly at the poor man, and thought, "Jesus will help me to make this man strong and well again." He stood there, with John at this side, and then he said to the crippled man, "Look at us. Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Then Peter took the man by the hand and he stood up and began to walk. People passing by saw him and knew that it was the man who had sat for so long at the Beautiful Gate. Now he was jumping and running,

and, speaking in a happy voice, he gave thanks to God for the wonderful thing that had happened to him.

Peter knew that he must tell the crowds that he had not been able to do this great deed with his own power. He turned to those standing near, and said,





“ Don’t look at us, thinking that we made this poor man walk because we were very clever or good. We love Jesus, and we have faith in Him and believe that He is able to do all things. It was through Jesus that this man was made well again.”

While Peter and John were speaking the priests from the Temple came. They were angry with Peter and John for talking to the people about Jesus and healing the lame man, and they put both the disciples into prison until the next day.

When morning came the Jewish rulers tried to make Peter and John say that they would not preach about Jesus, but they could not make this promise. They had done nothing wrong, so presently they were allowed to go.



Rhoda



AFTER PETER had escaped from prison and the angel had left him he walked through the quiet, dark streets until he came to a house where lived some friends.

People had met together in that house to pray for him, and living there was a little maid-servant called Rhoda, who knew Peter well. Rhoda was up very late that night, and when she heard a knocking at the door she ran to see who it was. She was so excited when Peter

spoke to her through a little opening in the door that she forgot to let him in but ran back into the house, leaving Peter standing outside.

“ Peter has come! He is standing at the door!” she said, joyfully. The people in the house would not believe her and could not think why she should say such a thing. They had been praying for Peter to be set free, but did not think the prayer would be answered so soon.

Rhoda kept saying that it really was their friend Peter at the door, and as the knocking began again someone went to the door with Rhoda and there, indeed, was Peter. How happy everyone felt! They laughed and talked, and then Peter asked them to be quite quiet. He told them the story of the angel who came to him in prison and helped him to escape, and he asked his friends to tell the other disciples that he was free again. Then he went away.



Dorcas



DORCAS, WHO lived at a place called Joppa, was always very kind to poor people, and everyone loved her. She could sew beautifully, and she spent much of her time making coats and dresses and other things for people who were poor and needed them. Dorcas was good and gentle, and people went to her for help if they were in any kind of trouble.

But one day Dorcas became very ill, and later she died. Her friends were

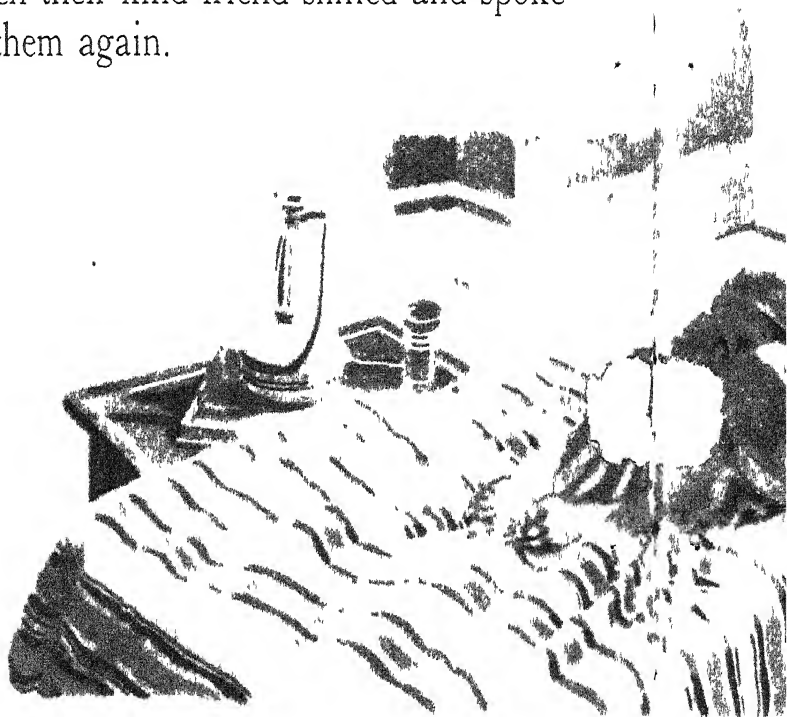
very sad, and wished that she was still able to smile and talk to them. Then someone thought of Peter, who was staying at Lydda, a place not far from Joppa. They remembered how he had healed the man at the Beautiful Gate, so two of the friends of Dorcas were sent to fetch him. When they found Peter they told him what had happened, and said, "Do come quickly."

Peter and the men hurried back to Joppa, and when they arrived people who knew Dorcas were in her room and they showed Peter some of the lovely clothes she had made. They told him how much they loved her.

Peter asked everyone to go away and leave him with Dorcas who was lying so still on her bed. Then he knelt down and prayed. We don't know exactly what Peter said, but perhaps his prayer was, "Dear Jesus, I know you are with me, helping me all the time though

I cannot see you. If it is your will, let Dorcas be well and strong again." Then he went to Dorcas, and said, "Dorcas, get up now." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Jesus had answered Peter's prayer.

He went to the door and called the people who were in the house. They came quickly, and they were happy when their kind friend smiled and spoke to them again.





Philip and the Queen's Servant



AMONG THE disciples was Philip, who helped with the work they tried to do for Jesus. One day Philip was told by an angel to start off on a journey from Jerusalem to Gaza. It was a long, long walk through sandy, desert places, but Philip did not wait. Quite alone he set off bravely. After he had been walking for some time he noticed that another person was making a journey along this desert road. When the traveller drew nearer Philip saw that he was a dark-

skinned African man driving in a chariot
—a big wooden cart drawn by two
horses. As he came nearer Philip
noticed how beautifully he was dressed,
and he could hear him reading aloud
from one of the books used in the Temple
at Jerusalem.



Philip thought, " Perhaps this man needs me to help him. It may be that this is why I was told to come this way."

He ran until he was near to the chariot, and then he said to the splendidly dressed African, " Do you understand what you are reading?"

The stranger had to say that the words were not at all clear to him, and he invited Philip to come and sit beside him in the chariot and help him.

Soon Philip knew a lot about his new friend, and was told that he was a Queen's servant, in charge of all her treasures. He was trusted by her in every way. He had been to Jerusalem, and he knew about the Jewish books that Jesus loved, but no one had ever told him about Jesus and all his care for men of every country.

Philip was now quite sure that he had been sent by God on the long journey from Jerusalem to Gaza so that he could



meet the Queen's servant and tell him about the kind deeds of Jesus.

They talked together for a long time, and then the African said, "I, too, want to have Jesus as my Guide and Helper. Do you think He will take me as a follower of His?"

Philip said, "I am quite certain He will, if you truly wish it."

Just then they came to a little pool, and the African turned to Philip and said, "You told me how Jesus was baptized by John, and how other men and women were baptized when they became His followers. Will you baptize me now?" Very gladly Philip agreed.

The Queen's servant went back to his own country, and we can be sure that he told people there about his meeting with Philip, the good man who talked to him about Jesus.

• •

When Jesus Called Paul



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FIRST BIBLE STORIES · VIII

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The Enemy who became a Friend

★

WE HAVE read how Peter and John went from place to place, spreading the good news about Jesus. Many men and women, and children, too, became His friends, but there were others who did not listen to Peter and John. It is sad to think that the followers of Jesus, who were called Christians, had many enemies. Sometimes they had to face cruelty.

One of those who tried to hurt the disciples was a man named Saul. He

went to the house where Saul was lodging. He was really almost afraid to go. He knew how cruel Saul had been to the Christians, and it seemed strange that this enemy had now become a friend. But Ananias knew that God wished him to visit Saul and so he went.

Saul and Ananias talked together, and then Saul found that his sight had returned. He was strong again now, and very happy, and quite soon he began telling people of the way Jesus had spoken to him when he was on his way to Damascus.

Later, Saul was known by the name of Paul, and we shall think of him by this new name.



A Journey in a Basket



IT WAS not surprising that at first the Christians at Damascus were afraid of Paul. They could hardly believe that he really meant to become a follower of Jesus; some of them thought it was a trick, but they need not have been anxious and worried.

Paul went into the Jewish Churches—the synagogues—saying that Jesus was the Son of God, and telling the Jews that they must remember the things that Jesus taught, and believe in Him.

The Jewish people who had once been the friends of Paul now began to dislike him very much. They plotted together and made up their minds to kill him, but Paul's new Christian friends kept him safe by hiding him in a house. But it was no longer wise for Paul to stay at Damascus.

The house where Paul was hiding was built high up on the city wall.



His friends knew that if they could put him down on the ground outside



that wall during the night then he could make his way back to Jerusalem. But how could that be done?

They decided that they would make a large basket. It needed to be very strong so that it would not break. After a lot of work at last the basket was ready, and then one night, when it was very dark, Paul got into the basket and they managed to lower it gently, a little at a time, through a window and down the wall. It must have been a difficult thing to do. When Paul was safely on the ground the friends pulled up the basket and took it in through the window again, so that no one would know that Paul had escaped that way.

Paul was grateful to his kind friends, and many years afterwards, in a letter, he spoke of the way he had been helped by them, when he made the journey in the basket.

Paul cures a Lame Man at Lystra



ONCE PAUL visited a place called Lystra. With him was a friend named Barnabas and together they went about the city, talking to people and preaching about Jesus.

One day they saw a man who was badly crippled. He had never been able to walk, and wherever he went he had to be carried. When Paul and Barnabas were speaking he had been listening, and as he heard about Jesus he felt a great love for Him.

Paul looked at the crippled man and felt very sorry for him, wishing that he could be made strong and well. Paul was sure that Jesus would help him to cure the crippled man, so he spoke to him clearly in a kind voice, and said, "Stand upright upon your feet!"



The man did not hesitate, but at once sprang up, and walked for the first time. How delighted he must have been!

It was not surprising that the men



. . .

and women who saw this happen thought that Paul and Barnabas were very wonderful people. They were ready to kneel and worship them both, and they brought garlands of flowers as presents. The people of Lystra hoped that Paul and Barnabas would stay in their city always.

Now these happenings made Paul and Barnabas unhappy. They said, "You must not kneel down before us, because we are ordinary men, just like yourselves."

They explained that they had come to tell the men and women of the wonderful God Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea. We can be sure that they spoke of Jesus, too, and told of His great deeds.

Long after, when Paul and Barnabas had gone away, the people of Lystra would be reminded of them when they saw the man who once had been a cripple and who now was quite strong again.

Paul makes two new Friends



PAUL TOOK long journeys as he walked about the country telling people about Jesus. We can be sure that he was often very tired, and would be glad to sit and rest for a while.

One day he came to a place called Corinth, and there he met a man named Aquila, and his wife, Priscilla. They were refugees. They had been forced to leave their home in Rome because the Roman Emperor had made a law that all Jews must go away. So Aquila and

Priscilla had to pack a few things, and start to search and search until they could find somewhere to live. They managed to get a little house in Corinth, and one day they were sitting in the doorway making a tent. This was the work they did to get money for food and clothes.



As they worked Paul happened to pass along the street, and for a time he stood watching them. He was interested because he, too, was a tent-maker. That was how he earned enough to keep himself while he went about the towns and villages preaching.

Aquila and Priscilla liked Paul very much. They said to him, " Please, stay with us while you are in Corinth. We will look after you and cook your meals, and in this way you will have more time for your work."

Paul was glad to say " Yes " to such a kind invitation, and we can be sure he felt happy at finding two such helpful friends. While he lived with them he talked to them about Jesus and they became Christians.

Aquila and Priscilla went with Paul on some of his travels. He never forgot these friends but often spoke of them in his letters to other people.



Lydia



GOING TO a new town or city Paul would first of all find a place to stay, and then he would look around for people who would listen to him when he spoke to them of Jesus.

One day, at Philippi, he was walking along the river-bank when he saw a little group of people who were holding a service out-of-doors. They were sitting in the sunshine, with the cool river nearby. Paul began to speak to them, and he was so eager and happy that they could



not help listening. Just think how you would feel if you were hearing about Jesus for the first time!



One of those who listened to Paul was a lady named Lydia, who had a beautiful house and many servants. She sold lovely purple cloth which people bought to make into dresses and coats. Lydia asked Paul to come to her house to speak to her family and her servants, and before long they all believed the wonderful things Paul told them about Jesus, and were baptized.

Then Lydia said to Paul, " If you are sure that I truly love Jesus, come and stay at my house." She was so eager to hear over and over again the stories of Jesus that Paul stayed at her house all the time that he was in Philippi.

Timothy



THERE WAS once a boy named Timothy. He grew up in a very happy home at Lystra. His father was a clever man who loved books and beautiful things. The name of Timothy's mother was Eunice, and in their house lived his grandmother also. Her name was Lois.

Timothy's mother read to him all the stories in the Old Testament that Jesus knew and loved, and she often prayed that when her little boy grew up he would



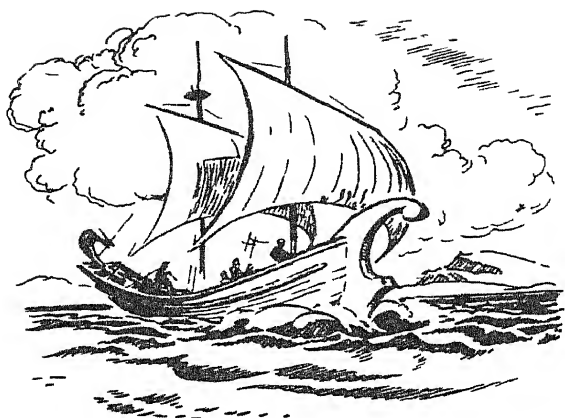
always love God and be a good man.

When Timothy had finished going to school and was tall and almost grown-up, the apostle Paul came to Lystra. It may be that he stayed at Timothy's house, and together everyone in the house would listen to the tale of Paul's adventures. I expect he told them how he was let down the wall in a basket. But first he would be sure to tell them the wonderful story of Jesus.

Timothy and Paul became great friends, and later they went together to far-away places. They even sailed across the sea to take the good news of Jesus.

Paul was so fond of Timothy that he often spoke of him as though he was his own son. When cruel men put Paul in prison he wrote long letters to Timothy. He told him to be loving and gentle, and to endure hardships "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ".





Paul. the Grave Apostle



FIRST BIBLE STORIES IN

And
The Great Apostle

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

RETOLD BY

ETHEL M. BOYCE

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT B. B. B.



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A Good Letter-writer



THE APOSTLE PAUL, who was such a great worker for Jesus, wrote many letters. They were not all lost, or destroyed, and we still have some of them. Although they were written long ago people still enjoy reading them and thinking about them.

Many of the letters came to be written in this way. Paul made long journeys to tell people about Jesus and the wonderful things that He had done when He lived on earth. Sometimes the

people who listened to him would start a little Church. Perhaps it would not be a new building, but just a room in someone's house. After Paul had gone away he would think of those new Christians who were trying so hard to be good followers of Jesus. Paul wondered how to help them, and often he decided to write a cheerful letter. He could not put the letter into a red pillar-box, nor was there a postman to deliver it. Instead, Paul would get a friend to write down what he planned to say, and then someone would be found to make the journey back over the miles that Paul had come. In this way the message was delivered. It was a very happy day when the traveller arrived with Paul's letter, and we can be sure that it was read in the little Church, not once, but many times.

Because the Christians often had to put up with cruelty and harsh treatment, Paul once wrote to his friends at a place

called Corinth and told them of some of the painful things which he had been obliged to bear. He said, in his letter,

“ I have been beaten, and pelted with stones, shipwrecked three times, and for a whole day and a night I was adrift on the sea. I have been hungry and thirsty, and often very cold, and many times in danger from robbers.”

We know that Paul was a very brave man, because he never once thought of giving up working for Jesus. He just kept on telling people how wonderful his Master was.



Paul and Silas in Prison



PAUL WAS WALKING one day with his friend, Silas, along the river bank at Philippi. A slave girl saw them, and she called to people near her, saying, "These men are the servants of God." Afterwards, whenever she met Paul and Silas, she would repeat her words, "These men are the servants of God." The poor slave-girl had a strange spirit in her which made her able to tell fortunes for people who were willing to pay money to her master. This made her



. .

master rich, and he was very angry with Paul when he called to the strange spirit in the girl and told it to come out of her. Now there would be no more money to be collected for the fortune-telling.

The slave-girl's master seized hold of Paul and Silas, getting rough men standing near to help him, and Paul and Silas were taken off to the Roman rulers who kept order in the city. Their story was that Paul and Silas were bad men who made trouble. So many untrue things were said that presently the rulers ordered Paul and Silas to be stripped and beaten with rods and put in prison. In spite of all their troubles, later on, in the quiet, dark prison, Paul and Silas were heard praying and singing happy songs to God.

Now it happened that during the night an earthquake shook the prison, and the doors flew open as they sometimes do in a high wind. The great

noise wakened the jailer, who was the keeper of the prison, and when he saw the open doors he felt quite sure that the prisoners had escaped.

But Paul called out to him, and said kindly, "Don't be alarmed. We are all here."



. .

It was clear that Paul and Silas were good men. They had not tried to leave the prison, and the jailer felt sure that the slave girl had been right to say "These men are the servants of God". He bound up the wounds of Paul and Silas and gave them food to eat. He said to Paul, "What must I do to be as happy as you are, with all that I have done wrong forgiven?" Paul replied, earnestly, "You must believe in Jesus." Afterwards the jailer and his family were baptized.

When day came the rulers sent a message to the prison saying that Paul and Silas were to be allowed to go free, but Paul said, "The Roman rulers had us beaten and put in prison, and now they want us to go. No, indeed, they must come themselves, and take us out." And this is just what happened. Later Paul and Silas went to the house of their friend, Lydia.



An Angry Mob



ONE LOVELY spring day in May Paul came to the city of Ephesus. Great numbers of people there knew nothing about Jesus, the wonderful teacher and healer. Instead, they worshipped a very large silver idol, which they called Diana. We can understand how sorry Paul felt for these people, and why he went here and there, talking to groups of people whenever they would listen, telling them of Jesus and His love.

Living at Ephesus was a man called Demetrius. He had a large workshop, and with the help of his workpeople he made little silver statues of the goddess



Diana, and these were sold to the people who visited Ephesus. This made him very rich, and he was most annoyed when he heard that Paul had come to Ephesus and was telling the people about Jesus.

He called his workmen together, and said, "A man named Paul is preaching in the streets of Ephesus. He is telling the people of a great King called Jesus, and already many believe in Him and have turned away from the worship of our goddess, Diana. We shall not be able to sell the silver statues we make."

The men who earned their living by this work were very angry. They rushed into the street shouting "Great is Diana" and other people joined in without really knowing why the silver-workers were troubled. It happened that the workmen saw two friends of Paul, named Gaius and Aristarchus. They seized them and took them to the great open-air meeting place, shouting, "These are two of the men who are doing us such harm." If Paul had been with them the angry mob might have stoned him to death.



It was a long time before the shouting died down, but when at last the people were quiet, one of the Roman rulers spoke to them. He said, "These men whom you accuse have done nothing wrong. If Demetrius and his workmen want to lay a charge against them they must do it in a proper manner. Now go away quietly." In little groups the crowd walked away, and soon the great meeting place was empty. Gaius and Aristarchus were free now to go on helping Paul to spread the good news about Jesus.



A Storm at Sea

FOR A LONG time Paul had wished very much to go to Rome. He hoped to be able to tell people there the story of Jesus, who did such wonderful things when He was here on earth. At last, when he was getting older, the chance came. It was in this way. Paul had been put in prison, and when he asked that, as a Roman citizen, he should be tried at Rome by the Emperor, he was put on a ship going in the direction of Italy.

Paul and the other prisoners were put

in the charge of a centurion named Julius. This was a very happy thing for Paul, for Julius was a good, kind man. He soon saw that Paul was no ordinary person. He felt such trust in him that when the ship reached the port of Sidon he allowed Paul to go ashore to visit some friends. This pleased Paul very much.

Later on, in very stormy weather, Julius and his prisoners were transferred to another ship carrying grain. Paul had learned a lot about boats when he was young, so after some days he went to the men in charge of the ship and told them, "I can see that this trip will mean serious loss. The grain we are carrying will have to be thrown overboard to lighten the ship. The lives of all of us will be in peril."

In spite of Paul's warning the captain decided to sail on and it was not long before the ship was at the mercy of a great storm. For many days the sky was dark,



and neither sun nor stars could be seen. The ship tossed and rolled so much that the sailors could not make proper meals. When the storm had been raging for some time Paul said, "Men, you should have listened to me: then we should have sheltered in the harbour at Crete. But now I bid you to cheer up. We shall have difficult times, but we shall not lose our lives. Last night an angel of the God I belong to and serve, stood before me, saying, 'Have no fear, Paul.' "

Paul's words comforted the sailors, and they toiled on. When the ship had been at sea for two weeks they felt that land was near. Paul said to them, "For fourteen days you have been on watch all the time without a proper meal. Take some food now, to help you." With the others looking on he took a loaf, and, thanking God, he broke it and began to eat. Then the others felt more cheerful, and ate some food, too.

Shelter at Last



WHEN MORNING came the sailors saw ahead of them a creek with a sandy beach, and now the captain hoped that the ship could be steered so that it would drift on to the shore. An order was given that all who could swim were to jump overboard and get to land. The rest used planks and wreckage as rafts, and in this way everyone reached safety. The shipwrecked people found that they had landed on the island of Melita, which is now called Malta.

The people who lived on the island were very kind, and they began at once to make a great fire on the shore, to warm the cold, shivering people, and to dry their clothes. Paul helped, too, by gathering a huge bundle of sticks and pieces of wood for the fire. As he laid the load on the fire a snake crawled out, and fastened itself on Paul's arm. The people of the island expected to see Paul die of the snake-bite, but nothing like that happened. Paul shook off the snake, and was not harmed in any way.

The governor of the island was called Publius. He had a fine house and a beautiful garden, and he, too, was kind to the sailors and to the prisoners. He cared for them all, and gave them good things to eat every day. But Publius was sad, because his father was ill. When Paul heard this he prayed to God for him, and God helped Paul to make the old man quite well. Other sick people on



. . .

the island came to Paul to be cured too.

And then it was time for Paul and the others to journey on again, and at last they reached Italy. Before Paul could arrive at Rome there was a long walk of many miles; this made Paul very tired and rather unhappy, but he was helped by a lovely surprise. Some Christians at Rome, who had heard that Paul was on the way, set off to meet him. Paul was delighted. When he saw them coming he thanked God for his good friends, and after that he was full of courage again.

When they reached Rome Paul was given permission to live in a little house outside the prison, but he could not forget that he was a prisoner because he was guarded all the time and there were chains on his arms. But Paul rejoiced, for he had time to write the letters he loved sending to the Churches, and he helped people in that way.

The Runaway Slave



IN A PLACE called Colossae there lived long ago a young man whose name was O-nesi-mus. Onesimus was a slave, and he belonged to a master named Phi-le-mon. The story does not say that Philemon was unkind to his slave-boy, but perhaps Onesimus became very tired of doing the same thing day after day, and never being able to choose the work he wished to do.

One day he decided to run away. He left the place where his master lived, and

he enjoyed roaming about the country side and travelling through the towns where he could work for money to buy food. Then he came to Rome, and there a wonderful thing happened. He met the apostle Paul, and listened to him speaking about Jesus. When Onesimus heard the beautiful story of the love of Jesus for all men and women and little children, he decided there and then that he would be one of His friends.

But people who learn to love the Lord Jesus Christ know that He means them to be honest and good. Onesimus had to tell Paul that he was a runaway slave, and that far off in Colossae his master would be looking for him, feeling angry at the way he had behaved. If Philemon had found his slave he might even have burnt a mark on his forehead to tell those who saw it that he had run away from his master.

Paul said, " Tell me the name of



your master.” And because Onesir us trusted Paul so much, he replied at once, “ My master’s name is Philemon!” How surprised the slave was when Paul said, “ Why, I know your master quite well! You must go back and say that you are sorry for what you did. I will write a letter asking him to forgive you.”

The letter that Paul wrote is one that people today can read, though it was written so long ago. Paul told Philemon that he had grown very fond of the slave, Onesimus. He said, “He is very dear to me, and he is now, like yourself, a Christian. You must treat him kindly.”

Paul wondered whether Onesimus owed his master any money, or whether in the past he had cheated in any way, so he put a note in the letter in his own handwriting, “ I, Paul, promise to pay.”

How kind it was of Paul to help as he did. We can feel sure that the story of the runaway slave had a happy ending.

More Stories Jesus Told



FIRST BIBLE STORIES. X

STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT
RETOLD BY
ETHEL M. BOYCE

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The Sower

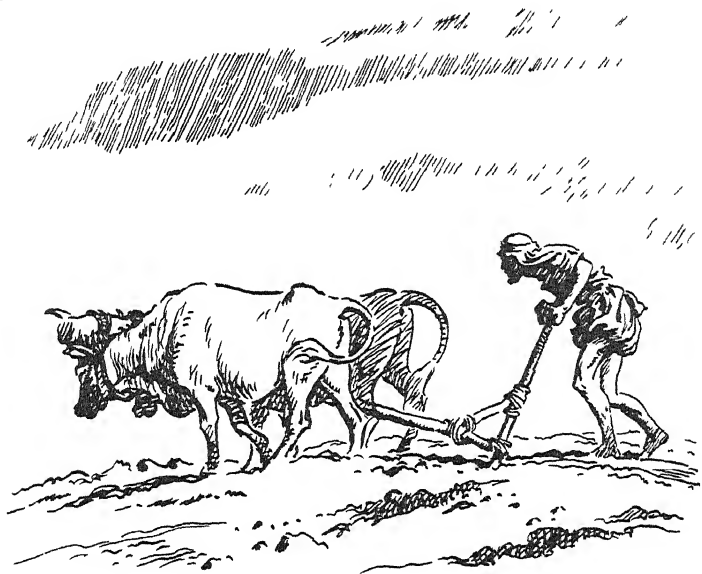


WHEN JĒSUS lived in Galilee, teaching and healing the people there, He often told them stories. They liked the stories of Jesus very much. One day he sat on the sea-shore, resting after a walk in the bright, hot sunshine. Men and women passing by saw Him and stopped. Presently a little crowd had gathered, and no doubt the people waited because they hoped that Jesus would talk to them, or tell a story. Jesus never disappointed anyone, so presently

He stood up and, going to a fisherman near by, said to him, " May I sit in your boat for a time, so that I can see easily all the people who wish to listen to me?" Of course, the fisherman was glad and proud to have Jesus use his boat.

The story Jesus told that day was about a man sowing seeds of corn in a field. He said to the people who listened, " Once there was a farmer who had a field. He had ploughed it, and made it ready for planting, and then one sunny day the farmer knew that the time had come to put in the seed. He walked up and down, taking handfuls of grain from a large basket and scattering them on the good earth. As he went, some of the grain fell on the hard, dry path which went through the middle of the field, and some was blown by the wind into a corner of the field where the soil was stony and rough. And quite a few of the seeds of corn fell near the hedge where

there were prickly bushes.” The people listened and they were very interested in the story because they had often seen farmers sowing seed. Why, even now, up on the hillside, a man was ploughing with two oxen and a wooden plough.



Jesus went on, “ Birds will fly down and pick up and eat the seeds from the path, for little plants could not possibly grow there. And what of the seeds on the

stony ground? Well, they may begin to grow a little but the sun will scorch the tiny roots and they will die. And the seeds that fell in the prickly bushes? When they begin to grow, the thorny branches will prevent the stems reaching up towards the sun, and so they will never be strong plants." Then Jesus smiled, and the people smiled too when He said, "Remember that lots and lots of the seed will fall on the good earth which has been prepared by the farmer. It will grow beautifully, and the farmer will be able to gather a great crop." Jesus said that some of the little seeds would grow into plants with a hundred grains of corn, and although other plants might not be quite so good, yet some would have sixty grains, and others thirty. So, at last, the farmer who had worked so hard would be happy at harvest time.



A Wonderful Party



JESUS was once invited to supper at the house of one of the Jewish rulers. While he was there He told the other guests a story about a man who planned to hold a most splendid party. A great many people were invited, and everything was arranged very carefully. On the days before the party there was a great deal to do. The house was made bright and clean, and a lot of beautiful food was prepared. At last the work was all finished, and the rich man sent his

servants to those who had been invited, saying, "Come now, for everything is ready!"



And then a very strange thing happened. The people who had been given invitations to the party began to make

excuses to the kind friend who had wished them to come to his house.

One man said, " I have bought a field, and I must go to look at it, and decide what I shall plant there."

Another person said, " Only yesterday I bought five pair of oxen; I must find out whether they are strong and healthy and able to plough my land. I am sorry I cannot come to the party."

A third man said, " I have just been married, and I am busy at my new house, so please excuse me."

It was not surprising that the master of the house who had prepared the wonderful party felt sad when his servants told him what had happened. But he made up his mind that all the good things which had been prepared should not be wasted, and he decided that other people should enjoy them instead. He said to his servants, " Go out into the lanes and streets of the city. When you



see a poor person, or someone lame, or blind, bring them in to my house." The servants did as they were told, and still there were places to be filled. So they went out again, and said to the people they met, "Do, please, come in and enjoy the party at my master's house. He doesn't wish to see one empty seat." Then when the room was quite full, the party began. It was sad that the people who had refused to go missed all the pleasures which had been prepared for them.



A Visitor in the Night



A MAN, with his wife and their children, lived in quite a small house. One evening they had been working late in their little field, and when supper time came they were all very hungry. The mother cut big slices of bread for father and the children, but presently they were asking for more. The mother laughed, and said, " You have eaten so much that we shall have nothing for breakfast. As soon as it is light I must get up and bake some fresh loaves." When supper was

finished the boys and girls and their parents went to bed, and soon they were all fast asleep.

And then there came a loud knocking at the door. Imagine how surprised the father was when he found, standing there, a friend who was on a long journey, and was seeking shelter for the night. Of course, he was at once asked into the house, but there was nothing he could be given to eat. The mother thought for a moment, and then she said, "Go quickly to our neighbour and tell him what has happened. Ask him for three loaves, so that we may have something for our friend to eat." The father went out into the dark night but when he knocked at the door of his neighbour's house and asked for the bread, a voice inside said, "Please go away. Don't bother us now. The door is locked, and we are all in bed." But the father knocked again, and the neighbour said



crossly, " You must leave us alone. You will wake the children." This was very disappointing, but thinking of the hungry traveller at home, the father called out once more, " Please get up and find some loaves for me. Won't you help me this time?" And because the father kept asking and would not go home empty-handed the neighbour at last went to the door and gave him the bread which was so much needed.

When we read this story we think of God, who is so loving that every day He gives to men and women, and boys and girls, all kinds of good things which they need, even before they ask Him.

The Ten Bridesmaids



THERE WERE once ten girls who were invited to be bridesmaids at a wedding. Because the weather was very hot the wedding was to be held in the cool of the evening. When the time came the girls made themselves ready, putting on their pretty bridesmaids' dresses, and carrying with them little lighted lamps. They needed these because when they heard the wedding-party coming along the road it was their special duty to go out to meet it, holding the little lamps

... place where the wedding would take place.

Five of the girls were very sensible and wise. They knew they might have to wait some time for the wedding-party, so they had each brought a tiny can of oil to fill their lamps if they went out. The other five had just brought their lighted lamps, hoping that the bright little light would last until the bridegroom came.

The ten girls sat together talking and laughing and thinking of the good time they expected to have at the wedding. But as they waited and time passed they became very tired and too sleepy to talk any more. At last they all slept with their lamps beside them on the ground. After a while they were awakened. It was a voice, saying, "Here is the wedding-party. The bridegroom is on the way." Then the girls sprang up quickly, rubbing their sleepy eyes.

wedding-party passed by, and after they had gone into the house the door was shut.

The girls who had forgotten to bring oil for their lamps could not go to the party. How sorry they were that they had not been more careful.





The Workers in the Vineyard



A MAN ONCE had a beautiful garden, called a vineyard. The work of looking after it was too much for him and he had to get other people to help him. One day he went out very early in the morning, and walked to the market-place where gardeners stood waiting for someone to hire them. The master chose men who looked strong and able to work well, and said to them, "Today I want you to go to my garden, and work there. When evening comes I will pay you a

sniffing. The men went off happily, and felt glad that they had found someone who could give them work to do.

But the master of the vineyard needed still more people to keep his garden looking beautiful, so he went to the market-place at nine o'clock, and then at mid-day, and again at three o'clock in the afternoon. When he found men waiting there, he said, "Go and work in my garden, and I will give you whatever wage is fair." Then, at last, when the day was nearly over, the master passed through the market-place at five o'clock, and seeing men still standing there he said to them, "Why are you standing doing nothing?" They could only answer him sadly, saying, "No man wanted us. We could not find anyone to work for!" Then the master said gently, "You may go to my vineyard. There is still time to do a little work."

When the sun was setting, the owner of the garden said to his servant, "Call the men now; pay them, and let them go home. Everyone who has worked in the garden is to get a shilling for wages."

When they heard this the men who had worked the whole day were surprised, and they felt that the master was unfair. Why should those who had worked just a short time receive a whole shilling? But the master of the garden said to the men who grumbled, "I said that I would give you a shilling for a whole day's work, and here it is. Go now, and be satisfied. If I choose to be kind and give to the others a shilling also, surely I can do what I like with my own money."

The master of the vineyard was a very generous man.

The Lost Coin



IN THE LAND where Jesus lived, the days were often very hot. Children played out-of-doors as we do in summer-time, and the mothers would leave their little, dark houses to do some of the work outside in the shade of a tree.

Jesus once told the story of a woman who lost a little silver coin. We do not know whether it was from the pretty veil she sometimes wore, or whether the coin was one from her purse, but the woman

in the story was very sorry to have lost it.

She called her boys and girls and asked them to help her look for the silver coin, and while they searched some neighbours came to help, too.



They went to the market-place, and to the well, and they searched all the paths leading to the house, but still there was no trace of the little silver coin. Presently the neighbours gathered up looking for it, and went away to their own homes.

Now the mother decided to look carefully all over her house, but before she could do this she had to find a candle and light it. She was quite determined to find the little silver coin, so she searched about, moving all the furniture and the cooking pots.

Then, when she was feeling tired and rather unhappy, a stray beam of sunshine found its way into the house. It showed her the little silver coin lying in the dust near the door. She ran to pick it up, and called to her neighbours, saying, "See, here is my coin. I have found it at last. I am so pleased, and I know you will be glad, too."

